■ Sports / A25

New England Patriots win Super Bowl

■ Business / B1

Peso hits 19-month high of 54.52:$1

■ Metro / A21

11 cops linked to dismissed NBI agent sacked

■ Across / A17

Misuari's men kill 12 soldiers in Jolo fighting

Tanong ng Bayan / A16

Year of the Rooster: Buenas para sa 'Pinas?

CELLCARD KADA ARAW, CELLPHONE KADA LINGGO! Text 2910 now!

Ash maker finds deeper Ash Wednesday meaning

By Christian V. Esguerra

TOMORROW will be no ordinary Ash Wednesday for 60-year-old Manuelito Zonio.

The day will mark his 17th year as resident "ash maker" of the Santissimo Rosario parish chapel on España Avenue, Manila.

As in previous Ash Wednesdays, Mang

ASH/ A9

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, February 8, 2005 ★★ 50 pages / 5 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 62 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Year of Rooster not for get-rich schemes

By George Sison
Contributor

YEAR OF THE ROOSTER NA! BAKA ISANG KAHIG, ISANG TUKA YAN!

AT 6:28 a.m. tomorrow, the rooster crows and announces the start of its reign. The Year of the Monkey's

YEAR/ A8

MANUELITO Zonio, resident "ash maker" of the Santissimo Rosario parish chapel in Manila, prepares the main ingredient for tomorrow's Ash Wednesday ritual. ERIK ARAZAS

US decision upheld our ruling–Davide

Solon warns gov't of 'secret deal' with Marcoses

By Philip C. Tubeza

IT WAS nothing less than an act of respect for Philippine sovereignty.

"I don't have to elaborate on that. The best evidence would be the decision itself," Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. said yesterday, reacting to the US court ruling that in effect recognized the Philippine Supreme Court's decision to forfeit to the state $683 million in assets of late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

"The sovereignty of the Philippine Republic, more particularly that of the judgment of the Supreme Court, has been duly respected," Davide said in an ambush interview. "Let the execution of the decision be done according to the decision."

Inexplicably, the US court ruling had also been profusely welcomed by former first lady Imelda Marcos—causing a member of Congress to suspect that some shadowy deal may be afoot.

"Mrs. Marcos can now pursue a secret deal with the Arroyo administration, especially today that the Marcos victims' compensation bill is not yet enacted," Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano said.

Mariano recalled that in 1993, the Presidential Commission on Good Government en-

US DECISION/ A6

SELDA
SELDA
SELDA
SA
SA
Jus

MARTIAL law victims Virgie Campos and Marie Hilao-Enriquez declare victory in last week's ruling by a US appellate court on their case against the Marcos estate. MITCH MAURICIO

Opposition still settling Ping, Edong conflict

By Christine O. Avendaño

NO DECISION has been reached to exclude Sen. Edgardo "Edong" Angara from efforts of opposition groups to unify into one bloc, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada said yesterday.

Estrada said this was what his father, former President Joseph Estrada, told him when they talked over the phone yesterday about an INQUIRER report quoting the latter as saying that opposition groups were considering easing out Angara.

"I just talked to my father just this afternoon and he informed me that there was nothing final, and that they were even initiating moves to (settle) the differences between Senators Panfilo ("Ping") Lacson and Angara," the young Estrada told reporters.

Asked by the INQUIRER whether he was supporting this position, the senator replied in the affirmative. "I'll go for the patching up between the two so that we in the opposition can enjoy a harmonious relationship," he said.

Angara, president of Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP), said he could not be expelled because he did not belong to the Partido ng Masang Pilipino, the party of the former President.

The LDP president said the opposition got together during the presidential election in 2004 when he organized the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP), which supported the candidacy of Fernando Poe Jr.

"But when the elections ended, the KNP self-destructed, especially when FPJ died," Angara said.

He said Estrada's statements against him

OPPOSITION/ A8

Chinese mining investors dismiss NPA threats

COMMUNIST guerrillas have warned that foreign mining activities in rebel-influenced areas faced potential armed attacks, but Chinese businessmen seeking to invest in a nickel project in the country are unfazed.

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) issued the threat amid renewed interest in the moribund resources sector after the Supreme Court upheld a law opening the industry to foreign investors.

"We will not allow mining companies to operate inside guerrilla fronts," CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal said yesterday on radio dzBB.

"If they (mining firms) insist on the wanton destruction of the environment, our forces are sure to launch all available means to paralyze their operations and force them out of the guerrilla zones," Rosal said.

The CPP leads the 8,000-member New People's Army (NPA), which has been waging a 36-year Maoist-style campaign in wide areas of the archipelago. The government suspended peace talks with the communists last year.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), fighting for over three decades for an independent state in areas it considers Moro homeland, on the other hand, is demanding that the local community get a share.

Many of the known but as yet unde-

CHINESE/ A6

Tribal leaders become 'barefoot docs'

By DJ Yap
PDI Research

TO THE Bagobos of Gumitan in Marilog, Davao City, a pregnancy rife with complications means 28 km on foot through a densely forested hill toward a national highway, and another 152 km on wheels to the general hospital.

Many such cases end on a tragic and bloody note: Mother and baby are left to die in the mountain.

Fatal childbirths are not all that the Bagobos dread.

A simple case of diarrhea can trigger an outbreak, as it did two years ago, killing nine people. Measles, tuberculosis and hepatitis also pose an ever-present threat.

Norma Enangoy has seen many of her people die of ailments that normally take only a few pills or vaccine shots to prevent. She has always felt helpless in the face of these frequent tragedies.

Now, thanks to a medical foundation, Enangoy may finally be able to do something. She joined 29 other leaders and representatives of ethnic groups from all over the Philippines in a three-

TRIBAL/ A5

Mountaineer dies in trek on Makiling

By Nikko Dizon and Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

THEY heard the voices of children and the sound of a rushing river.

But there were no children and all they found was a dead river.

"We were lost. We thought we heard children playing so we followed the sound of their voices, thinking they could lead us back to the trail. But all we saw was a dead river. There were no children. Everything was just still," mountaineer Alfredo Tomines told the INQUIRER.

Moments later, while negotiating a steep slope on Mt. Makiling, Tomines' companions, Rimando Pimentel and Lolita Ramos, slipped and fell. The rock footholds had given way because of the soft soil.

Ramos, 53, managed to grab a vine and tree branches which broke her fall. Pimentel, a 49-year-old dentist, fell head first some 400 meters.

Hearing Ramos' scream, Tomines, 31, who had walked several meters ahead of the pair, rushed back, sliding down the slope.

Tomines said Pimentel was still alive when he reached him, but blood was trickling from his mouth and he had a

MOUNTAINEER/ A8

Jewish refugees honor 4 brothers, Filipinos

CINCINNATI—As the Nazis took power in Germany and the world turned its back on Jewish refugees, four brothers who ran a cigar factory in the Philippines worked quietly to help 1,200 Jews flee to Manila.

The Frieder brothers, who have since died, never talked about their part in the little-known rescue. But some 65 years later, the remaining refugees want the world to know what Philip, Alex, Morris and Herbert Frieder achieved.

"The Frieder brothers were just ordinary Jewish businessmen, but they went out of their way to save lives," said Frank Ephraim, who was 8 years old when his family fled to Manila from Germany in 1939.

"No one made them do it. They just did what they thought was right," Ephraim said.

The four Frieder brothers from Cincinnati had taken turns going to Manila for two-year periods during the 1920s and 1930s to run the Helena Cigar Factory, started by their father in 1918.

While they were in Manila, the brothers

JEWISH/ A6

THE FRIEDER brothers—(from left), Morris, Herbert, Philip, Henry and Alex—are shown in a family photo in 1935 in Cincinnati. They operated a factory in the pre-war Philippines that helped rescue 1,200 Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe. AP

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/02/08/05

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

2 solons suspended in ₱2.5M case

By Armand N. Nocum and Carlito Pablo

The SANDIGANBAYAN yesterday slapped a 90-day suspension on two incumbent congressmen, a former governor and a provincial board member in connection with a P2.5-million alleged anomaly involving the provincial government of Oriental Mindoro in 1997.

Suspended were Representatives Rodolfo Valencia and Alfonso Umali, of the first and second districts of Oriental Mindoro, respectively, for offenses they allegedly committed while Valencia was governor and Umali, provincial administrator.

Also suspended were former Vice Gov. Pedrito Reyes and incumbent board member Jose Leynes.

The 90-day suspension, which was filed before the antigraft court in 1997, will be in effect while the case is being heard.

In a 14-page resolution, justices of the Fourth Division directed the House secretary general, through Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., to implement the order on Valencia and Reyes.

The accused were charged bail of P30,000 each.

"In the meantime, Valencia, Umali and Leynes are directed to cease and desist from exercising the functions and privileges of their respective positions for 90 days immediately upon receipt of the resolution," the antigraft court said.

In their resolution, Justices Gregory Ong, Jose Hernandez and Rodolfo Ponferrada granted the request of the prosecutors to suspend the officials and upheld the charges filed by the Ombudsman.

"Undoubtedly, for as long as they occupy public office, they can be suspended pending litigation. It matters not that they are charged with acts or omissions committed when they were still holding public positions other that those they are presently occupying," the court said.

Government prosecutors had accused the four of conspiring with each other in entering into an allegedly anomalous contract with an engineer Alfredo Atienza, to whom the provincial government under Valencia issued P2.5 million in public funds for the purpose of repairing, operating and maintaining the latter's private roll-on roll-off cargo vessel in January 1994.

The vessel was reportedly used to transport goods to people hit by floods in Oriental Mindoro at the time.

The case hit a snag after the Supreme Court issued a temporary restraining order in favor of the accused in May 2000, but this was lifted in June 2004.

Those who stood as witnesses against the four were former Oriental Mindoro Gov. Benjamin Espiritu, a former provincial treasurer and three other ranking provincial officials.

A Sandiganbayan sheriff, however, doubted the suspension order against the two congressmen could be carried out.

"They are co-equal bodies," the official said of the legislature and the judiciary.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, the official said implementation of the order would depend on the House leadership and colleagues of Valencia and Reyes.

"The ball is in the court of Speaker De Venecia. He has to exercise political will on this," he said, adding that other members of Congress were likely to take up the cudgels for their suspended colleagues.

But House Majority Leader Rep. Prospero Nograles (Lakas, Davao City) said Valencia and Umali couldn't be suspended just yet because the suspension order had been referred to the lower chamber's legal department for "study."

The same order will have to be evaluated subsequently by the House committee on rules, which Nograles chairs, before it is eventually referred, if at all, to the House committee on ethics.

"I am told it is the House ethics committee which has the jurisdiction on matters of disciplinary action against members of the House," Nograles said.

Nograles said even a recommendation for suspension by the same committee needs the approval of the House membership voting in plenary.

Nograles, a lawyer, stressed that by operation of the separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judicial branches, the suspension order on Valencia and Umali cannot be enforced immediately.

Black prop, DPWH chief says of raps against him

By Jerome Aning and Carlito Pablo

PUBLIC Works Secretary Florante Soriquez yesterday said people in the agency affected by his reforms were using black propaganda to discredit and ultimately oust him.

Soriquez was reacting to reports that he had allegedly demanded P150,000 from each of the 16 Department of Public Works and Highways regional directors for the purchase of bougainvillea shrubs to be planted along the national highways.

The secretary clarified that he never solicited any money from the directors and recounted that in his meeting with them last week, all he did was to ask that the sides and medians of national highways be planted to shrubs because most of them were bare.

"Of course, what's in my mind is that I may be running over some people because of the reforms I've been implementing," he told reporters, when asked who he thought was responsible for the black propaganda.

Soriquez said his latest "reform," which he admitted may have angered some people, was his recent transfer of personnel from the DPWH's comptrollership and management services.

He said he found out that 80 percent of the division—which handles financial and budgetary matters —were not performing well so he had them transferred to other posts.

"I only want them to [shape] up so that they can be effective," he said.

Earlier, a senior DPWH official warned Soriquez that some of their colleagues were plotting to discredit the secretary and have him replaced for a similar reason —they were being affected by Soriquez's reforms in the agency.

Danilo Manalang, a director in the DPWH Project Management Office in charge of public buildings, said the group wanted to preserve their "network of corruption" in the department.

"They are about to be unmasked by the secretary's ongoing transparency drive. That's why they went ahead with their plan to ask for his replacement so that they can put one of [their own] in the DPWH's top seat so that their network can be preserved," Manalang said.

The director said he was willing to name names and expose how the group operates in the DPWH before Congress or any investigative body.

Manalang added that the plan to have Soriquez ousted was begun last week with a "fake" petition to President Macapagal-Arroyo calling for the DPWH chief's replacement.

But if an opposition lawmaker is to be believed, Soriquez has made his pile since his appointment in 2003 and has become the most unpopular guy at the DPWH.

In a privilege speech, Rep. Rodolfo Plaza (NPC, Agusan del Sur) yesterday denounced the alleged "quota" system in the DPWH, which purportedly provides Soriquez a "fixed *tong* (payoff)" from his subordinates.

Plaza said his office received a call yesterday from a DPWH district engineer "who refused to be identified" but claimed personal knowledge of a supposed P50,000 monthly quota for each of the DPWH's 173 district engineers.

"From this *tong* alone, Soriquez collects a yearly bounty of almost P104 million doing nothing but perhaps studying other income-generating options available to him," Plaza said.

Plaza also charged that Soriquez has been demanding a 15-percent cut from project directors for projects "whether big or small."

"When projects are foreign-assisted, 5 percent is the alleged [cut] of Soriquez," Plaza said.

Plaza said Soriquez recently called DPWH regional directors and asked them to contribute P150,000 each for the purchase of 'bougainvilla' plants for a supposed beautification project for Metro Manila.

When the regional directors refused to comply, according to Plaza, the DPWH chief called on the agency's 173 district engineers to make a contribution under pain of being stripped of their posts.

"I was told he threatened to float or reshuffle these officials if they refused to support him," Plaza said.

NO TO BUDGET CUT

Students of the University of the Philippines-Manila clash with antiriot policemen in front of the Senate building yesterday after they tried to enter the chamber to register their protest to cuts in the university's budget.

JESS YUSON

'That yacht's gonna cost you'

By Carlito Pablo

IN THIS scenario, it's only the rich who will be taxed.

The House ways and means committee will start today deliberations on two proposed measures seeking to slap value-added and excise taxes on the pleasures enjoyed by the affluent.

These proposals are embodied in House Bill Nos. 2831 and 2267 authored by Representatives Abraham Mitra (LP, Palawan) and Catalino Figueroa (KNP, Western Samar), respectively.

In his bill, Mitra identified a number of goods and services which he proposed to slap a 10-percent value-added tax and a 20 percent excise tax.

Mitra listed the following as "non-essential goods" to be taxed: perfumes and toilet waters, yachts and other vessels intended for pleasure or sports, and antiques or rare goods.

Mitra said taxes should also be levied on "non-essential services" like those "undertaken for aesthetic purposes such as but not limited to cosmetic surgeries and body enhancement services."

In short, this latter category includes beauty enhancement procedures like liposuction and the like.

According to Mitra's estimates, this bill could raise P1 billion.

In the bill, Figueroa wants a 10 percent VAT and 20 percent excise tax on "selected goods and appliances."

These include high-priced carpets made of wool or fine animal hair, mobile phones, whirlpool baths, golf sets and requisites, pianos, video cameras, microwave ovens and television sets with picture tube bigger than 21 inches.

Gay wedding OK, says Satur

THE TIMES they really are a-changing.

This according to Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo, who was reacting to the first gay marriage in the New People's Army between Ka Andres and Ka Jose which took place last week in Compostela Valley.

Ocampo is a former peace negotiator for the National Democratic Front, the political arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

"That's the way of the 21st century," he said with a smile.

"That is already a reality in Europe and in many Nordic countries although this is the first time it is being practiced in the communist movement."

Asked if he would file a bill to legalize the practice, Ocampo said it would be a long shot because he considered the issue "advanced."

Right now, he said, his group's main concern was the promotion of reproductive health care and, if possible, legislating a divorce law. *Cynthia D. Balana*

WHO checking RP ability to respond to chem warfare

By Blanche S. Rivera

A TEAM from the World Health Organization is in the Philippines to assess the country's preparedness to respond to the "deliberate use of biological and chemical agents" to spread disease.

Eight members of the WHO's Program for Preparedness for Deliberate Epidemics flew in from Geneva, Switzerland, to open a workshop for the country's emergency response personnel from the Department of Health, National Disaster Coordinating Council and National Security Council.

The Philippines is the fourth country to be visited by the WHO team since the agency resolved to equip developing countries with tools to help improve health systems.

In a resolution dated May 18, 2002, the WHO pledged to help its member states improve their health systems, giving particular attention to disease surveillance and toxicology, risk communication and psychological consequences of emergencies.

The resolution came eight months after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York, which killed more than 3,000 people.

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said the WHO wanted to make sure its members were ready to respond to "deliberate epidemics" caused by biological and chemical agents.

A joint WHO-Department of Health workshop for Philippine emergency management experts opened at the Mandarin Hotel in Makati City yesterday.

Four assessment teams—three in Manila and one in Davao—would be formed to conduct field testing in hospitals and other institutions concerned with disaster management, the DOH said.

The field testing involves a preliminary questionnaire and analysis, an introductory workshop and preliminary assessment, field visits, a report debriefing workshop and follow-up.

Probe of Lapids over quarrying in Pampanga sought

By Cynthia Balana and Michael Lim Ubac

PAMPANGA Vice Gov. Yeng Guiao and three congressmen have sought a congressional investigation of Sen. Lito Lapid and his son, Pampanga Gov. Mark Lapid, for alleged missing revenues of the provincial government amounting to P337 million.

Senator Lapid was governor of the mineral-rich province from 2002 to 2004 before he was succeeded by his son.

Guiao, together with party-list Rep. Joel Villanueva of the Citizens' Battle Against Corruption (Cibac), An Waray Rep. Florencio Noel and Partido ng Manggawa Rep. Renato Magtubo, said in a press conference the missing funds represented uncollected and undeclared taxes and fees earned by the provincial government from the extraction and hauling of sand, gravel and other quarry resources in the province.

Guiao, a son of the late Pampanga Gov. Bren Guiao, said the alleged irregularities would have not prospered without the knowledge of administrative officials under the governor's office as well as the provincial treasurer.

Guiao said his lawyers were gathering more evidence before deciding on what charges to file against the culprits.

"We are not really after putting somebody in jail. We are here to create an awareness in the media so that appropriate agencies like the Office of the Ombudsman can act on this," Guiao said.

To prove his point, Guaio presented to the media samples of what he claimed to be some of three sacks of fake receipts issued to the provincial government in the course of the quarrying transactions which his office was able to gather.

Guiao, who won the vice governorship of the province last year, was a member of the provincial board at the time. As such, he had no hand in the quarry transactions as these were under the jurisdiction of the governor, he said.

He said the alleged fake receipts had a different format and were stamped as "used" unlike the genuine receipts which had handwritten figures and details of the transactions on them.

Each receipt issued by the provincial government was for an administrative service fee and a sand fee amounting to P150 each, or a total of P300.

Guiao said the National Printing Office had branded the receipts as fake.

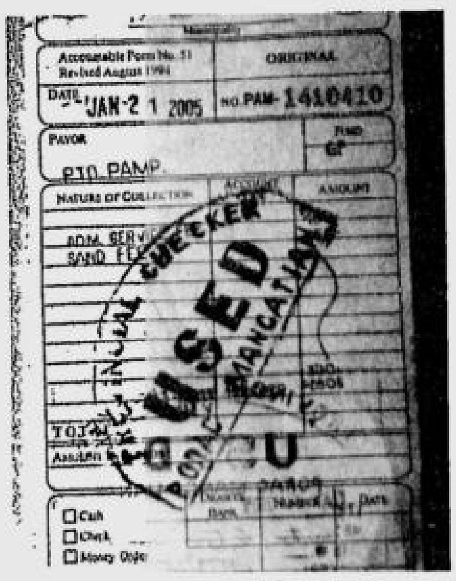
Guiao also said that an average of 2,000 to 3,000 truckloads of sand, gravel and other mineral resources were being extracted and hauled every day from the different quarry sites in the province.

The Natural Resources and Development Corp. (NRDC), the corporate arm of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, was the collecting agent of the national government from 1999 to 2001.

During the three-year period, NRDC was able to collect P382 million in revenues from these operations, P103 million of which went to the barangays and towns of Pampanga as their share from the provincial government.

In 2002, the collection of quarry taxes and fees, as well as the control and supervision of quarrying in river systems and embankment areas in the lahar-affected provinces of Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales reverted to local government units by virtue of Proclamation 183 issued by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

From 2002 to 2005, the provincial government was only able to collect P45 million.



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☐ Check
☐ Money Order

ALLEGED fake quarry receipt

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1M names for Susan on V-Day

ONE MILLION of the three million signatures friends of the late actor and presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. promised to gather will be presented to his widow, Susan Roces, on Valentine's Day, according to an official of a Poe support group.

Movie actor Rez Cortez said, "We will present to Ms Susan Roces the signatures on Valentine's Day and we will ask her up to where she can lead us."

Cortez was interviewed by the INQUIRER after he called on Pasay City Mayor Peewee Trinidad, a Poe supporter, to get permission to make the rounds of the city to gather signatures.

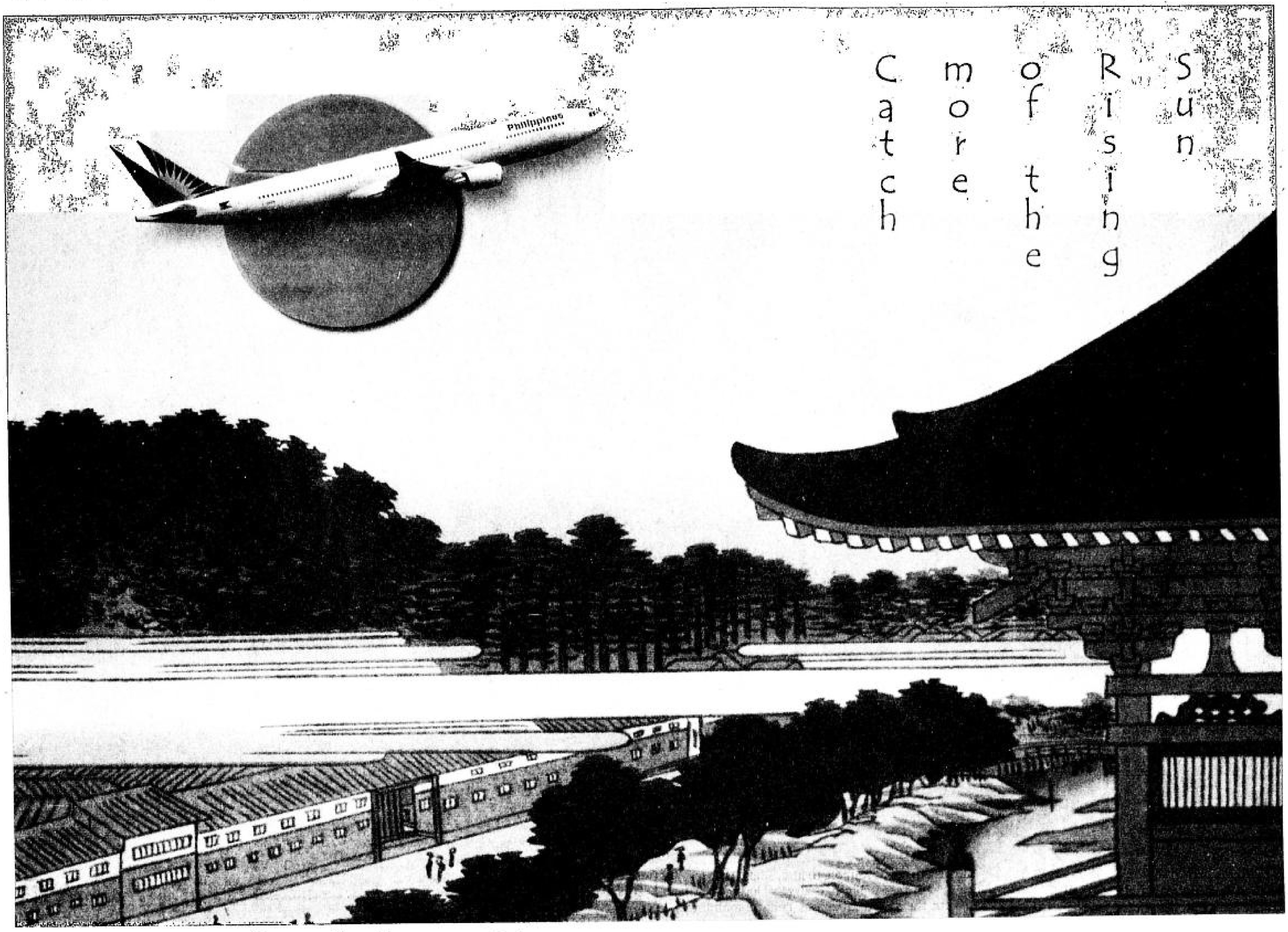
Cortez, chair of the National Council of Concerned Volunteers for FPJ, said the group had so far collected more than 400,000 signatures in Metro Manila alone.

"These signatures will be shown to Ms Roces, that people want to know the truth [about who really won the presidential election]," Cortez said.

The signature campaign was launched on Jan. 4 and was meant to convince Roces to lead the opposition in place of her late husband, who died on Dec. 14, 2004, a few days after suffering a massive stroke.

Roces in earlier interviews had said she would not be persuaded to go into politics.

Cortez said the signature campaign would end when the three-million mark is reached. *Nancy C. Carvajal*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Q: BAKIT NAMIN IPINAGLALABAN ANG KASONG ITO?

A: DAHIL ANG MALILIIT NA CONSUMER
AY MAAAPEKTUHAN NITO,
ANG MGA MAY KONSUMO NG MAS MABABA SA 100 KWH.

Ipinag-utos ng Court of Appeals (CA) kamakailan ang pagbawi sa desisyon ng Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) ayon sa paghimay ng Meralco bill. Ang ruling na ito ay mangangahulugang babalik ang PPA, mawawala ang lifeline subsidy, at tataas ang presyo ng kuryente. Mapipilitang magbayad ang mga Meralco customers na kumukunsumo ng 0-100 kWh ng dagdag na higit sa P100 buwan-buwan, at isauli ang halagang aabot sa halos P2,000 para sa mga buwan mula June 2003 hanggang sa ngayon.

Sa panahon ngayon, ayaw ng Meralco na dagdagan pa ang pahirap ng maliliit na customers. Ito ang dahilan kaya't iaapela ng Meralco ang desisyon ng CA sa Supreme Court, sa ngalan ng transparency at pagpapahalaga sa mas maliliit na customers.

Hinihingi po namin ang inyong pag-unawa at suporta sa bagay na ito. Ginagawa po namin ang lahat upang patuloy na magkaroon ng liwanag ang ating buhay. Maraming salamat po.

Power.

We receive, transform and deliver it.
We may not create it,

but we make it useful.
Meralco. The power to change power.

MERALCO

Tribal leaders become 'barefoot docs'

From page A1

week training to become "barefoot doctors" in their communities.

The Foundation of Our Lady of Peace Mission Inc., a medical charity institution based in Parañaque City, gathered together leaders of 22 minority groups from as far north as the Kankanaey of Benguet to as far south as the Yakan of Basilan.

Child delivery, LBM

Led by Sr. Eva Maamo, a physician and the foundation's president, the training was conducted from Jan. 17 to Feb. 5.

The trainers included volunteer medical practitioners from the Our Lady of Peace Hospital and other medical institutions, including the Philippine General Hospital and the Manila Doctors Hospital.

The tribe leaders learned basic skills and knowledge in primary health care, such as first aid, child delivery and treatment of common diseases or ailments, such as loose bowel movement.

They were also given medical kits containing stethoscopes, blood pressure apparatus, a basic surgical set, scissors, forceps and gloves, among other items.

With her newfound knowledge, Enangoy is hopeful she can help prevent the spread of treatable and preventable diseases in her 1,000-strong barangay.

Medical missions by charitable groups sometimes visit Gumitan to tend to the sick, but these missions are once-a-year events because of the rough terrain, she said.

"It takes two to three days before they arrive, and they have to cross bodies of water," she said, speaking in Filipino. The climb up the Mundo Hill is very difficult because of the terrain, she added.

Inferiority complex

Aida Jalmaani, a leader of the Sama tribe of Calarian, Zamboanga City, said the reason for their lack of awareness in treating and preventing sickness lay not just in the inaccessibility of their community, but also in their lack of education.

For example, she said, they did not know personal hygiene and how it contributed to one's health.

Sangking Tongcaling of the T'boli of South Cotabato, said their ancestors and parents did not want to send them to school because of inferiority complex.

Thanks to the training program, they now have a better chance to combat disease, she said.

The outside world

Oddly enough, members of the ethnic communities sometimes get sick when they go to urban settlements.

A tribe leader described how one of her people was struck down by a strain of hepatitis after going to the city and eating at a "*turo-turo*" (sidewalk eatery).

Maamo said she was very happy with how the seminar turned out, expressing optimism that the tribe leaders could pass on what they had learned to their communities.

A star is born

"I thought we would have problems because there were 30 of them, but they were very attentive to the lessons, and they showed how much they have learned from the seminar," she said.

F OUR LADY OF P MISSION, INC.
Plight of Trib

SOME of the health trainees from tribal groups: (From left, first row) Divina Padecio, Sangking Tongcaling, Norma Enango, Aida Jalmaani, Perinion Banda; (second row) Nestor Bulan and Julie Sagsag. ROGER MARGALLO

Tribe leaders quickly bonded with each other in the three weeks they were together.

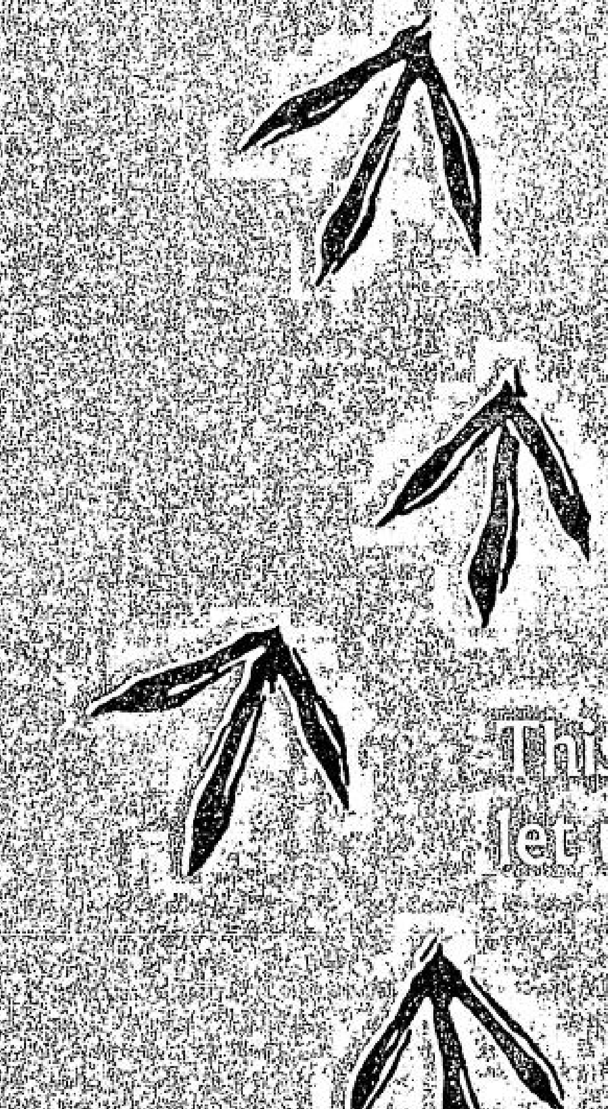
"They even formed an organization of their own. We didn't ask them to do that," Maamo said.

Another positive outcome from the event was something Maamo did not expect:

"One of them told me: 'Sister, do you know that back home, if you go to Manila, you're famous. But if you stay three weeks in Manila, you're a star!'"

Being a star among her people is the last thing on Enangoy's mind.

When she returns home, she will be happy with the knowledge that, though illnesses may and will still fall on Gumitan, she and her people will no longer feel so helpless.



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US decision upheld our ruling—Davide

From page A1

tered into a compromise agreement with the Marcoses for a global settlement of the Marcos assets based on a 75-25 sharing in favor of the government. In exchange, the Marcoses would be made immune from criminal and civil prosecution.

The Supreme Court voided that deal.

Mariano warned President Macapagal-Arroyo against striking any compromise with the Marcoses without first consulting the people, particularly the victims of atrocities during martial law.

He said the Marcos widow could exploit the current weak fiscal position of the government to increase her leverage in striking a deal.

The Philippine high court's ruling became final on Nov. 18, 2003 after it rejected the Marcoses' motion for reconsideration.

P11B for victims

Congress has yet to determine the amount of compensation the Marcos victims would get.

Sen. Joker Arroyo warned Malacañang that it could not reduce the $200 million, or P11 billion, compensation that Congress was now working on.

Arroyo was commenting on Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye's statement that Malacañang had ordered the budget department to allot P8 billion from the proceeds of the Marcos wealth to the claimants.

Arroyo, who sponsored one of three compensation bills in the Senate, asked where Bunye got the amount of P8 billion when the measure being deliberated on in Congress spoke of $200 million.

Is there 'kupit'?

"Mr. Bunye, who blabbers on about any subject under the sun but who knows next to nothing about this piece of legislation, is trying to make *'kupit'* (chisel) P3 billion from the victims to enhance the funds of the National Treasury," Arroyo said in a statement.

It is statements like these that get Ms Arroyo into trouble, the maverick senator said.

"It's not because of what she does or says but because of what her overeager subalterns do, say, and feed her," he said.

The senator said Swiss authorities had turned over to the Philippines the Marcos money on the understanding that a portion of it would go to the Marcos victims.

"The $200 million is not included in the ongoing 2005 budget deliberations because it is a special appropriations measure with a built-in funding," Arroyo said. "And Malacañang is making *palusot* (trying to wiggle out of it)."

"No way can that be reduced by the executive, or by the absentee Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima, who at the height of the ... budget deliberations, has been so yellow, he has yet to show his face in the Senate," Arroyo said.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said the compensation measure would be calendared for plenary debate after the budget deliberations.

Pangilinan said enacting the measure would be the "last hope" for the victims.

'Psychic payment'

"Payment of compensation does not merely represent financial renumeration, but also psychic payment and closure to a sorry chapter in our history," he said.

"We cannot quantify in money terms the lives that have been lost during the dictatorship. This is both an issue of justice and accountability. Albeit late, the measure sends the message that public officials must account for their acts."

Akbayan party-list Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales, chair of the House committee on human rights, said the US court ruling was not a loss but a victory for the 9,500 human rights claimants because it was the Philippine Supreme Court's decision to forfeit the Marcos money to the government.

She said the Supreme Court decision was in line with a condition set by Swiss authorities that a portion of the money be used to indemnify the victims.

Malacañang yesterday reiterated it would honor the government commitment to compensate the victims.

"They (the victims) have waited too long and have endured protracted legal battles so there is no more reason for government to further delay their compensation," Bunye said.

The pending compensation bill would amend the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, which mandates that all proceeds from the Marcos wealth shall go to agrarian reform.

Victory, not defeat

Human rights leader Marie Hilao-Enriquez, one of those who suffered under Marcos, also denied that the US court decision was a defeat for the claimants.

Enriquez, leader of the rights groups Selda and Karapatan, said in an interview that Marcos victims who were awarded compensation by a Hawaii court in 1993 saw the California appellate court's decision as a victory.

"There's no longer any obstacle in the way of President Macapagal-Arroyo's promise to compensate the victims of martial law," she said.

With the ill-gotten assets safely in the hands of the state, Enriquez said the government should now honor its "moral obligation."

"I don't know what's the big deal. It seems (in the report) that we lost with the appellate court's decision when in fact, we didn't," Enriquez said.

She said the appellate court did not overturn the Hawaii court's original decision that Marcos was guilty of human rights violations and that his victims should be indemnified. *With reports from Cynthia D. Balana, Christine O. Avendaño, Michael Lim Ubac, Juliet Labog-Javellana and Norman Bordadora*

'Marcoses must voluntarily return people's wealth'

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The US 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled on Feb. 4 that American courts cannot overturn a foreign country's Supreme Court. This, in effect, put the disputed $683 million in assets linked to Ferdinand Marcos beyond the reach of the victims of human rights abuses during his rule. Until they were transferred to the Philippines, the assets had been held in Switzerland.

Below are excerpts from a statement that former Sen. Jovito Salonga, former chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, released to the INQUIRER *"so our people can better understand the banner headlines." The italics were supplied by the author.)*

By Jovito Salonga

- IN EFFECT, the US court ruled that, by virtue of the "State of Acts" doctrine, American courts have no right to sit in judgment on the acts of another State.
- Contrary to the claims of the lawyers for the victims of human rights abuses, who had won a jury verdict for $2 billion in Honolulu in 1995, *the Swiss Federal Supreme Court held that "there is no connection between the crimes (such as graft and corruption) which caused the Marcos assets in Switzerland to be frozen ...' and the claims of the human rights victims."* According to international agreements, observed the Swiss Supreme Court, victims of grave human rights violations are entitled to compensation and fair trial in which they can enforce their claim for compensation. Such claims are primarily directed against the Philippines in whose territory the human rights violations were committed.

Options for victims

- The victims may choose to file their claims in the probate (or intestate) proceedings of the Marcoses or claim damages against the Government for the wrongs committed by one of its organs.
- Because the Philippines and Switzerland are signatories to the UN Convention against torture and other cruel or inhuman, humiliating treatment, the Swiss Supreme Court said the Philippines should *inform* the Swiss authorities about "essential developments regarding measures and proceedings to indemnify the victims of human rights violations."

Marcoses need be heard

- Since foreign judgments cannot just take effect here without giving the Marcoses an opportunity to be heard, the matter had to be litigated anew in forfeiture proceedings in the Philippines.
- Actually, the US court decision had already become moot and academic after the November 2003 final decision of our Supreme Court [which forfeited the Marcos money to the government].

The greater part of the $683 million ... went to (1) the funding of the agrarian reform program; (2) the payment of minimal attorney's fees of the original Swiss counsel; and (3) the setting aside by the PCGG of around $150 million for the indemnification of victims during martial law, in anticipation of the passage of an act of Congress authorizing their compensation.

How large is the wealth?

- On March 27, 1998, Philippine newspapers reported Imelda Marcos' [statement] to The Associated Press and the French News Agency: "There is more Marcos wealth that this Government is not yet aware of, but for the time being, *I can admit that there is only $800 million in various international banks, but I cannot reveal them."*
- The truth of this assertion was bolstered by the May 12, 2002 revelation of a Canadian-Welsh lawyer in the employ of a Swiss firm, namely, that on the eve of the freeze of the Marcos Swiss deposits on March 24, 1986, the Marcoses were able, through their agents and trustees in a big Swiss bank, to secretly withdraw at least $400 million of the Marcos deposits, and immediately transferred the same to a Lichstenstein subsidiary.

The Canadian lawyer said this amount must have grown to more than double ($800 million) due to the accumulation of interest.

- On Jan. 13, 2005, Mrs. Marcos went to Malacañang for the first time after the hurried flight of the Marcoses on Feb. 25, 1986. The broadcast and print media reported Imelda's support for the administration of GMA.

The best way to do that—help the victims of human rights abuses and the whole nation—is for the Marcos family to now voluntarily return the wealth of our people. The alternative might be disgraceful.

SISTERS (from left) Peggy Selonick, Susan Stern and Jane Ellis pose by a photo showing them as young girls at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Their father, Morris Frieder, helped save Jewish refugees in Nazi Europe. AP

Jewish refugees honor 4 brothers, Filipinos

From page A1

established a Jewish Refugee Committee and worked with highly placed friends—US High Commissioner of the Philippines Paul V. McNutt and Commonwealth President Manuel L. Quezon—to help the mostly German and Austrian refugees get passports and visas, then find employment and homes in Manila.

"We were welcomed in the Philippines at a time when the gates to Jews were closed all over the world," said refugee tte Hershfield, 74, of West Hartford, Connecticut.

A fifth brother remained in Ohio and was not involved in the rescue.

The rescue was little known until a recent book by Ephraim, "Escape to Manila: From Nazi Tyranny to Japanese Terror," led to efforts in the United States and the Philippines to honor the humanitarian effort before the aging refugees die off.

"Our numbers are dwindling, and I didn't want this story to be lost forever," said Ephraim, 73, of Washington, DC.

Cincinnati rites

On Sunday, Cincinnati's Center for Holocaust and Humanity Education will honor the Frieder brothers, Quezon, McNutt and the Filipino people.

At least 25 Jewish refugees and their descendants and nearly 100 members of the Frieder family will join relatives of McNutt and Quezon and Philippine Ambassador Alberto Del Rosario in ceremonies at the Cincinnati center.

Documents show the Frieders had hoped to bring as many as 10,000 refugees to the Philippines, but World War II intervened. They continued working in Manila until the Japanese invasion in 1941.

Alex Frieder's daughter, Alice Weston, now 78 and living in Cincinnati, said she remembered her father raising money and spending hours poring over lists of desperate refugee applicants in Manila.

"Our children have asked why no one ever told them about this, but we were just kids then," she said. "After we came back to the United States, my father and uncles never talked about it. I think they just thought it was part of their duty, and they just went on with their lives."

Now the brothers' photos, letters and other possessions, along with those of the refugees, will become part of a permanent exhibit in Cincinnati. Part of the exhibit might be taken to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, and to Manila.

"We want to tell the world about the humanity of these men who did so much to save so many people and were never recognized," said Racelle Weiman, director of the Center for Holocaust and Humanity Education. "We hope it will make people realize that everyone can make a difference."

Proud of his grandpa

Manuel L. Quezon III, a columnist of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, said he was proud of his grandfather's role in the rescue. "In a sense, as president, he was implementing a national policy of the heart," he said.

A great nephew of McNutt, who also was governor of Indiana in 1933-37, didn't know about his great grandfather's role in the rescue but said he wasn't surprised.

"Paul had the chance to do many different things and always chose public service," said John Krauss, director of the Indiana University Center for Urban Policy and the Environment.

The brothers offered then Col. Dwight D. Eisenhower a job in the rescue effort, but he decided to stay in the Army, becoming commander of Allied forces in Europe and then US president, according to granddaughter Susan Eisenhower.

The brothers' family is grateful for the long-delayed recognition.

"We are all so proud of them," said Morris Frieder's daughter, Jane Ellis, 77. "But we wish they could be here to enjoy this." *AP*

Chinese mining ...

From page A1

veloped mineral deposits in the country are located in areas controlled by either communist or Moro guerrillas.

At a meeting on the sidelines of the recent Philippine Mining Conference in Makati City, a mining executive said Chinese businessmen had a few chuckles when they heard of Rosal's threat.

There were 25 Chinese businessmen representing six companies and groups—China Chamber of Commerce of Metals, Minerals and Chemicals Importers and Exporters, China Metallurgical Construction Group Corp., MCC International Resources Development Corp., Jinchuan Grp. Ltd., China Non-Ferrous Metal Industry's Foreign Engineering and Construction Co. Ltd. and Hiltona Fund AVV.

The executive, who asked not to be named, said the Chinese businessmen, considered among the most aggressive among foreign investors in the local mining industry, thought that Rosal had probably forgotten where most of his group's funds were coming from.

The executive said China was sensitive to how its citizens were treated abroad, which is why Filipino communists treat Chinese investors differently.

Road show in China

The executive cited the case of a highway project in Quezon province, a known hive of NPA guerrillas, whose construction could not get off the ground for years when it was under a Korean company. But when a Chinese firm took over the project, the province's highway was completed in record time.

With the renewed interest in mining, the government has stepped up its investment promotion in the industry, especially in China, which has a large appetite for mineral resources to sustain its fast growth.

A few weeks before the Philippine Mining Conference was held, officials of the government and the Philippine Chamber of Mines conducted a road show in China to invite mining companies to look at investment opportunities in the country.

One of the deals firmed up during the road show was the plan of Jinchuan Non-Ferrous Corp. which is keen on taking a major role in the Nonoc Nickel project in Surigao del Norte. The site is said to have nickel and cobalt reserves worth $5.9 billion.

The rush to revive the mining sector has delayed peace talks with the largest Moro guerrilla group until March and may endanger them entirely, the chief rebel negotiator said.

"The issue of ancestral domain is the most ticklish issue," Mohaqher Iqbal, a leader of the 11,000-member MILF, said at a hideout in Mindanao. "It can make or break the peace talks."

Informal negotiations with the government, hosted by Malaysia and designed to hammer out major issues before a formal deal is signed, is expected to restart in early February.

Iqbal said the MILF had asked for an extension until March to consult local Muslims and indigenous groups after the Supreme Court ruling on foreign ownership of mining projects.

"The position of the MILF is very simple. The exploitation of natural resources in areas where we occupy should benefit the Bangsamoro people," he said. "The government should be careful on this because it affects the peace talks."

Iqbal said the MILF would put the issue on the table at next month's talks in Kuala Lumpur but had "not made any specific threats that we will sabotage mining operations."

Beyond the presence of MILF and communist rebels, as well as indigenous groups, the issue of ancestral domain and mining is complicated by some companies and property owners, many of them Christians, opposing the idea of giving up their land.

Flagship projects

The government said last week that it was expecting the initial development of mineral deposits worth $90 billion.

President Macapagal-Arroyo sees the mineral extraction sector as a quick ticket to poverty reduction for the Philippines, where half the population of 84 million earn the equivalent of $2 a day or less.

Rigoberto Tiglao, head of the Presidential Management Staff, told reporters Friday that the government hoped to develop 23 mining projects with foreign investors.

He put total mining wealth in the country at $840 billion but said most of these reserves had gone untapped due to previous laws restricting mining to local companies.

Environment Secretary Michael Defensor said the country could earn an additional $2 billion yearly if the "23 flagship projects" pushed through.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau said the country earned less than $1 billion from the industry, now led by cash-starved Filipino companies. *Reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Reuters and AFP*

Correction

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, the banner story—"US ruling on Marcos money elates Imelda"—misstated in some parts of the article the amount of compensation to be set aside for martial law victims in a bill sponsored by Sen. Joker Arroyo. The proposed amount is P11 billion—not $11 billion.

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Noli asks PET to set aside Loren protest

By Philip C. Tubeza

VICE President Noli de Castro yesterday asked the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET) to reconsider its ruling finding former Sen. Loren Legarda's election protest against him to be "sufficient in form and substance."

In a 26-page motion for reconsideration, De Castro asked the tribunal to set aside its resolution of Jan. 18 and dismiss Legarda's election protest.

"The instant petition/protest, which resonates more of propaganda, will certainly pass as a political speech but will not replace hard facts," De Castro said.

He said the court erred in ruling that it could recanvass the election returns (ERs) and other canvass documents despite the availability of the ballots and that it had the power to correct manifest errors in the ERs or certificates of canvass (COCs).

"It is respectfully submitted that the correction of manifest errors in the statement of votes as well as the (COCs) is not the proper function of this honorable tribunal," De Castro said.

"The correction of manifest errors in the statement of votes and other canvass documents can only be part of the canvassing process, which was terminated on 24 June 2004 with the proclamation of protestee as Vice President-elect by Congress acting as the National Board of Canvassers," he said.

De Castro said the tribunal erred in transforming itself into a canvassing body. Instead of a recanvass, a revision of ballots should be done to correct errors in ERs or COCs, he added.

De Castro said ballots are "the best evidence" to ascertain the number of votes that he and Legarda got in the last May elections.

"It is the data obtained from this revision of ballots that should be tabulated and totaled, not the data as reflected in the (ERs) and (COCs) that are secondary evidence inferior to the ballots," he said.

Legarda had claimed that she had been cheated, through *dagdag-bawas* (vote-padding and -shaving) in the election return results in 9,007 precincts from six provinces, one city, and five municipalities and in ballot results from 124,404 precincts in 44 cities and provinces.

However, De Castro maintained that Legarda's election protest was insufficient in form and substance due to its numerous mistakes and alleged lack of facts "that would independently sustain the prayer of a claimant."

In its Jan. 18 ruling, the PET said Legarda's protest was "sufficient in form and substantially serious enough on its face to pose a challenge to the validity of (De Castro's) title to his office."

The court also ordered Congress officials and election officers to ensure the integrity of the questioned election returns and other election documents in preparation for their transfer to the tribunal.

O. Isaac; 73

COL. OSBALDO B. Isaac (ret.), a member of Philippine Military Academy Class 1955, died after suffering heart failure on Feb. 7. He was 73.

His body lies at the Katarungan Village Chapel in Antipolo City.

He is survived by his wife Teresita; children Gerry and Chi, Roxy, Willy and Suy, Sylvia and Greg, Paul and Dezzie, Agnes, and Tina; grandchildren Nikki, Yuri and Boo. Interment will be announced later.

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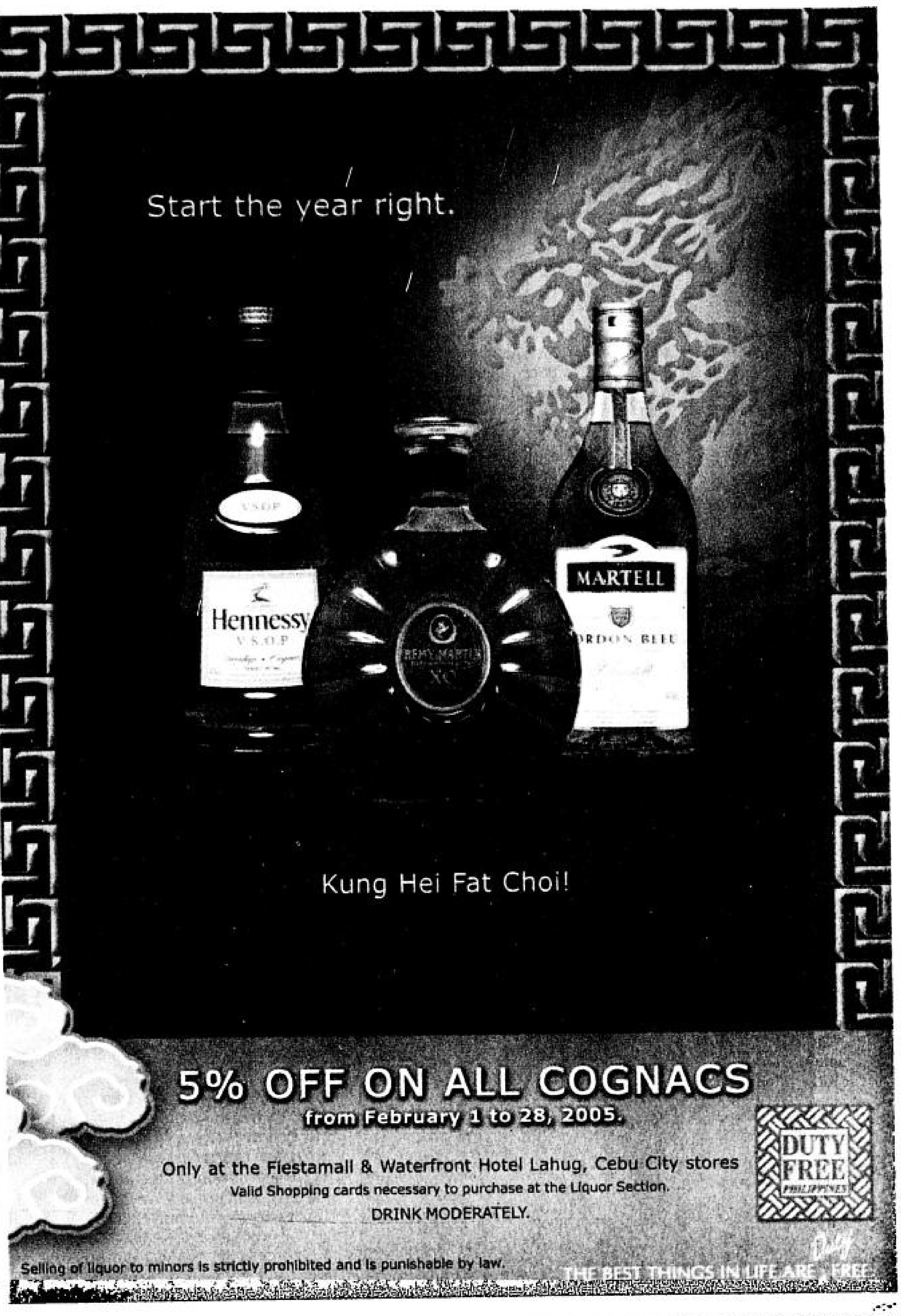

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Year of Rooster not for get-rich schemes

WESTERN	EASTERN									
Aries	Dragon	1916	1928	1940	1952	1964	1976	1988	2000	2012
Taurus	Snake	1917	1929	1941	1953	1965	1977	1989	2001	2013
Gemini	Horse	1906	1918	1930	1942	1954	1966	1978	1990	2002
Cancer	Sheep	1907	1919	1931	1943	1955	1967	1979	1991	2003
Leo	Monkey	1908	1920	1932	1944	1956	1968	1980	1992	2004
Virgo	Rooster	1909	1921	1933	1945	1957	1969	1981	1993	2005
Libra	Dog	1910	1922	1934	1946	1958	1970	1982	1994	2006
Scorpio	Pig	1911	1923	1935	1947	1959	1971	1983	1995	2007
Sagittarius	Rat	1912	1924	1936	1948	1960	1972	1984	1996	2008
Capricorn	Ox	1913	1925	1937	1949	1961	1973	1985	1997	2009
Aquarius	Tiger	1914	1926	1938	1950	1962	1974	1986	1998	2010
Pisces	Rabbit	1915	1927	1939	1951	1963	1975	1987	1999	2011

From page A1

optimism is carried over to the Year of the Rooster, but definitely, it is not the year for get-rich schemes. At all costs, one must try to resist the great temptation to join wild-goose chases.

Politics will adhere to hardline policies and governments will flex muscles at each other. But, there is nothing to worry about because it's just for show. Wood will tone down the usually very colorful rooster but it will still remain ostentatious.

There will be lots of arguments on all fronts—in business, in romance and even in the home. But these arguments will cause no permanent damage to anyone. Cockiness will be the order of the day but the rooster rests at night.

Because efficiency is the byword of the Year of the Rooster, nobody will really go hungry. It is, however, suggested that people should keep their eyes open and their mouths closed. It is a year when nerves can be frayed but pockets won't be empty.

- For the Rat—Celebrations are in store for the rat. There will be new partnerships or marriages in the family. Good things will happen overnight. Due to many commitments, the rat must guard against overwork which could be detrimental to health.
- For the Ox—It will be a moderately happy time for the ox, which will enjoy success even as something unlikely or strange is experienced. Even so, it must be careful about being too trusting.
- For the Tiger—There will be a tendency to be overanxious. But seemingly large problems will be solved. Help will likely come from unexpected places or newfound friends.
- For the Rabbit—It will be a time for the rabbit to merge with others for support and comfort, taking a more conservative stand in making important decisions. Although most frustrating at times, problems will ultimately be solved.
- For the Dragon—It will be a happy and eventful year for the dragon. There will be good news, promotions, and the return of money given up for lost. Family life will be smooth, losses recouped and new influential friends made.
- For the Snake—It will be a very auspicious year. The achievements of the snake can be fantastic. Recognition or promotion is forthcoming. Patience and past perseverance will be rewarded. Profits or some big increase in income can be expected. The snake reaps fruits of labor.
- For the Horse—It will a fairly good year. There will be good tidings at home but slight disturbances in career or profession. Problems will be small but the horse may become impatient and upbeat too easily.
- For the Sheep—It's time for the sheep to trim great expectations and get practical. Many invitations will come that will prove to be the happier events of the year.
- For the Monkey—The monkey will have extra money and right contacts to push plans through. But it must be careful not to overextend with forced socializing and commitments.
- For the Rooster—It's time for a splendid comeback. Problems will be solved with relative ease with ideas finding the support of influential and powerful people. Even in disputes, the rooster will emerge unhurt.
- For the Dog—The dog could be faced with challenges in credibility. Attention must be focused on health and relationships. More effort will have to be exerted to get money due a dog.
- For the Pig—It will be another busy year for the pig. Although the domestic scene will be calm, professional life could prove to be less stable. It is a year of spending more time overcoming obstructions. Patience must be practiced as negotiations could get complicated.

For additional insights, one can combine the Western equivalent of the Eastern sign as indicated in the chart.

Please observe that the Dragon is the equivalent of the Western sign of Aries and the Snake is the equivalent of the Western sign of Taurus. Thus, if you were born in the Year of the Dragon and you are Taurean you can read the indications for both the Dragon and the Snake. For example, President Macapagal-Arroyo was born in the Year of the Pig, but being born on April 5, an Arien sign, the equivalent of which is a Dragon in the Eastern zodiac, she could, therefore, read both the Pig and the Dragon to find out what's in store for her in the Year of the Wooden Rooster.

(EDITOR'S Note: George Sison is the author of the best selling book, "A Miracle Awaits You," TV host of "Will Your Fortune in the Game of Life," founder of the Temple of Prayer, Peace and Prosperity. He is also a well-known songwriter, poet-painter and astrologer. See also related stories in Across the Nation, Page A19.)

Lakas, Kampi row heats up

By Carlito Pablo

THE SIMMERING rivalry between administration parties Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats and Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) has come to a boil again.

Neophyte Rep. Gerardo Espina Jr. (Biliran) yesterday bolted Lakas and took his oath as a new Kampi member before the Kampi president, Rep. Ronaldo Puno (Antipolo).

But Espina's defection did not increase the number of Kampi members, which has remained at 36, because someone else bolted the party.

Kampi has lost Rep. Josefina Joson (Nueva Ecija), who joined the Lakas camp, according to Puno.

Puno himself has emerged from the woodwork after keeping out of the public limelight since the last few months of 2004.

He and other Kampi big guns yesterday called a press conference to reiterate the party's strong opposition to a move in the House of Representatives to revive the issue of Charter change through a constituent assembly.

Charter change, particularly the shift to a parliamentary and federal system of government, is identified with Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., Lakas president, and his allies.

Opposition still settling Ping, Edong conflict

From page A1

took him by surprise because there was no indication of any of this when they last talked to each other two weeks ago.

He noted that he was one of the last Cabinet members who stood by the Estrada presidency in 2001. "That's why I could only explain that some of his advisers are not advising him well,'" he said.

For his part, Lacson said he was "pleasantly surprised" by moves to exclude Angara from the opposition. He said Estrada did not consult him on moves to ease out Angara.

"This is not a choice between Angara and Lacson but a choice between an opposition wanting to unite and Angara," Lacson said at a press conference.

"This is an issue involving trust, good will, and good faith," he said.

Asked what his position would be on this, he said there was no need for the opposition to consult him because "they know exactly where my sentiments lie."

Lacson said the exclusion of Angara would help the opposition unify. "We can unite by removing the distrust at least against one person," he said; noting this was his personal view.

Angara not LDP

Reading the statements of the former President in the INQUIRER report on Monday, Lacson said Estrada was excluding Angara and not the LDP.

"Angara is not LDP and LDP is not Angara," he said.

He said Angara's son, Aurora Rep. Sonny Angara, and his sister, Aurora Gov. Bellaflor Angara, were "most welcome to remain with the opposition." Both are members of the LDP.

Asked why Angara was the one being ousted and not him, Lacson said: "Maybe I'm considered a more genuine opposition [member than Angara]."

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From page A1

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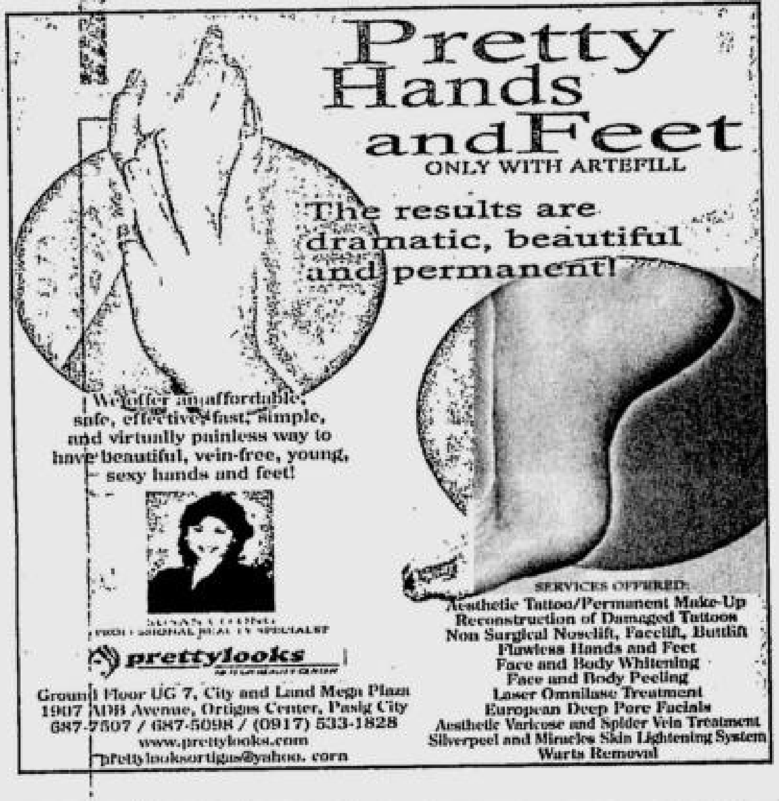
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Year of Rooster not for get-rich schemes

WESTERN	EASTERN									
Aries	Dragon	1916	1928	1940	1952	1964	1976	1988	2000	2012
Taurus	Snake	1917	1929	1941	1953	1965	1977	1989	2001	2013
Gemini	Horse	1906	1918	1930	1942	1954	1966	1978	1990	2002
Cancer	Sheep	1907	1919	1931	1943	1955	1967	1979	1991	2003
Leo	Monkey	1908	1920	1932	1944	1956	1968	1980	1992	2004
Virgo	Rooster	1909	1921	1933	1945	1957	1969	1981	1993	2005
Libra	Dog	1910	1922	1934	1946	1958	1970	1982	1994	2006
Scorpio	Pig	1911	1923	1935	1947	1959	1971	1983	1995	2007
Sagittarius	Rat	1912	1924	1936	1948	1960	1972	1984	1996	2008
Capricorn	Ox	1913	1925	1937	1949	1961	1973	1985	1997	2009
Aquarius	Tiger	1914	1926	1938	1950	1962	1974	1986	1998	2010
Pisces	Rabbit	1915	1927	1939	1951	1963	1975	1987	1999	2011

From page A1

optimism is carried over to the Year of the Rooster, but definitely, it is not the year for get-rich schemes. At all costs, one must try to resist the great temptation to join wild-goose chases.

Politics will adhere to hardline policies and governments will flex muscles at each other. But, there is nothing to worry about because it's just for show. Wood will tone down the usually very colorful rooster but it will still remain ostentatious.

There will be lots of arguments on all fronts—in business, in romance and even in the home. But these arguments will cause no permanent damage to anyone. Cockiness will be the order of the day but the rooster rests at night.

Because efficiency is the byword of the Year of the Rooster, nobody will really go hungry. It is, however, suggested that people should keep their eyes open and their mouths closed. It is a year when nerves can be frayed but pockets won't be empty.

- For the Rat—Celebrations are in store for the rat. There will be new partnerships or marriages in the family. Good things will happen overnight. Due to many commitments, the rat must guard against overwork which could be detrimental to health.
- For the Ox—It will be a moderately happy time for the ox, which will enjoy success even as something unlikely or strange is experienced. Even so, it must be careful about being too trusting.
- For the Tiger—There will be a tendency to be overanxious. But seemingly large problems will be solved. Help will likely come from unexpected places or newfound friends.
- For the Rabbit—It will be a time for the rabbit to merge with others for support and comfort, taking a more conservative stand in making important decisions. Although most frustrating at times, problems will ultimately be solved.
- For the Dragon—It will be a happy and eventful year for the dragon. There will be good news, promotions, and the return of money given up for lost. Family life will be smooth, losses recouped and new influential friends made.
- For the Snake—It will be a very auspicious year. The achievements of the snake can be fantastic. Recognition or promotion is forthcoming. Patience and past perseverance will be rewarded. Profits or some big increase in income can be expected. The snake reaps fruits of labor.
- For the Horse—It will a fairly good year. There will be good tidings at home but slight disturbances in career or profession. Problems will be small but the horse may become impatient and upbeat too easily.
- For the Sheep—It's time for the sheep to trim great expectations and get practical. Many invitations will come that will prove to be the happier events of the year.
- For the Monkey—The monkey will have extra money and right contacts to push plans through. But it must be careful not to overextend with forced socializing and commitments.
- For the Rooster—It's time for a splendid comeback. Problems will be solved with relative ease with ideas finding the support of influential and powerful people. Even in disputes, the rooster will emerge unhurt.
- For the Dog—The dog could be faced with challenges in credibility. Attention must be focused on health and relationships. More effort will have to be exerted to get money due a dog.
- For the Pig—It will be another busy year for the pig. Although the domestic scene will be calm, professional life could prove to be less stable. It is a year of spending more time overcoming obstructions. Patience must be practiced as negotiations could get complicated.

For additional insights, one can combine the Western equivalent of the Eastern sign as indicated in the chart.

Please observe that the Dragon is the equivalent of the Western sign of Aries and the Snake is the equivalent of the Western sign of Taurus. Thus, if you were born in the Year of the Dragon and you are Taurean you can read the indications for both the Dragon and the Snake. For example, President Macapagal-Arroyo was born in the Year of the Pig, but being born on April 5, an Arien sign, the equivalent of which is a Dragon in the Eastern zodiac, she could, therefore, read both the Pig and the Dragon to find out what's in store for her in the Year of the Wooden Rooster.

(EDITOR'S Note: George Sison is the author of the best selling book, "A Miracle Awaits You," TV host of "Will Your Fortune in the Game of Life," founder of the Temple of Prayer, Peace and Prosperity. He is also a well-known songwriter, poet-painter and astrologer. See also related stories in Across the Nation, Page A19.)

Lakas, Kampi row heats up

By Carlito Pablo

THE SIMMERING rivalry between administration parties Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats and Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) has come to a boil again.

Neophyte Rep. Gerardo Espina Jr. (Biliran) yesterday bolted Lakas and took his oath as a new Kampi member before the Kampi president, Rep. Ronaldo Puno (Antipolo).

But Espina's defection did not increase the number of Kampi members, which has remained at 36, because someone else bolted the party.

Kampi has lost Rep. Josefina Joson (Nueva Ecija), who joined the Lakas camp, according to Puno.

Puno himself has emerged from the woodwork after keeping out of the public limelight since the last few months of 2004.

He and other Kampi big guns yesterday called a press conference to reiterate the party's strong opposition to a move in the House of Representatives to revive the issue of Charter change through a constituent assembly.

Charter change, particularly the shift to a parliamentary and federal system of government, is identified with Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., Lakas president, and his allies.

Opposition still settling Ping, Edong conflict

From page A1

took him by surprise because there was no indication of any of this when they last talked to each other two weeks ago.

He noted that he was one of the last Cabinet members who stood by the Estrada presidency in 2001. "That's why I could only explain that some of his advisers are not advising him well,'" he said.

For his part, Lacson said he was "pleasantly surprised" by moves to exclude Angara from the opposition. He said Estrada did not consult him on moves to ease out Angara.

"This is not a choice between Angara and Lacson but a choice between an opposition wanting to unite and Angara," Lacson said at a press conference.

"This is an issue involving trust, good will, and good faith," he said.

Asked what his position would be on this, he said there was no need for the opposition to consult him because "they know exactly where my sentiments lie."

Lacson said the exclusion of Angara would help the opposition unify. "We can unite by removing the distrust at least against one person," he said; noting this was his personal view.

Angara not LDP

Reading the statements of the former President in the INQUIRER report on Monday, Lacson said Estrada was excluding Angara and not the LDP.

"Angara is not LDP and LDP is not Angara," he said.

He said Angara's son, Aurora Rep. Sonny Angara, and his sister, Aurora Gov. Bellaflor Angara, were "most welcome to remain with the opposition." Both are members of the LDP.

Asked why Angara was the one being ousted and not him, Lacson said: "Maybe I'm considered a more genuine opposition [member than Angara]."

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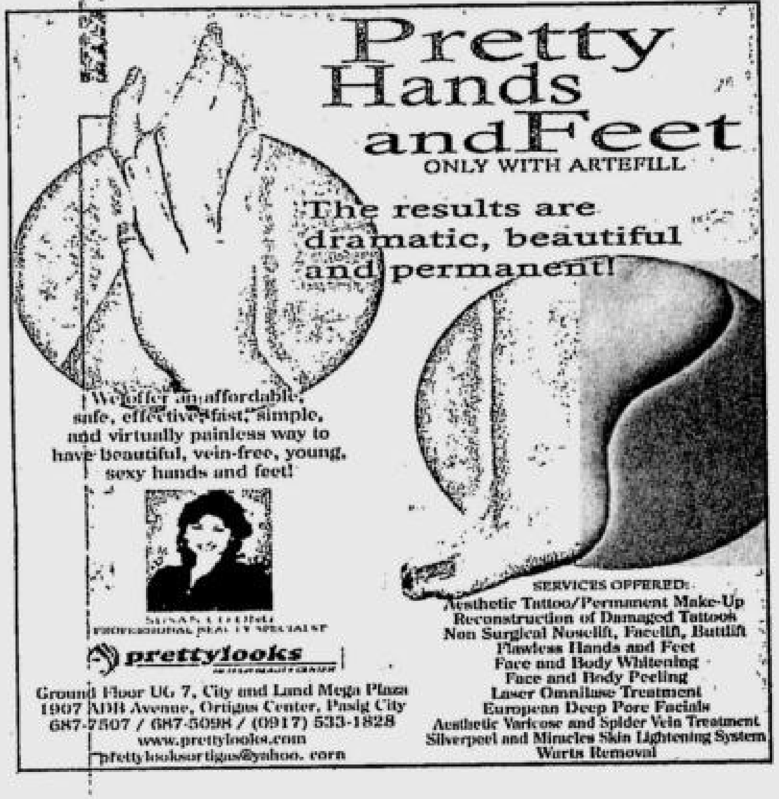

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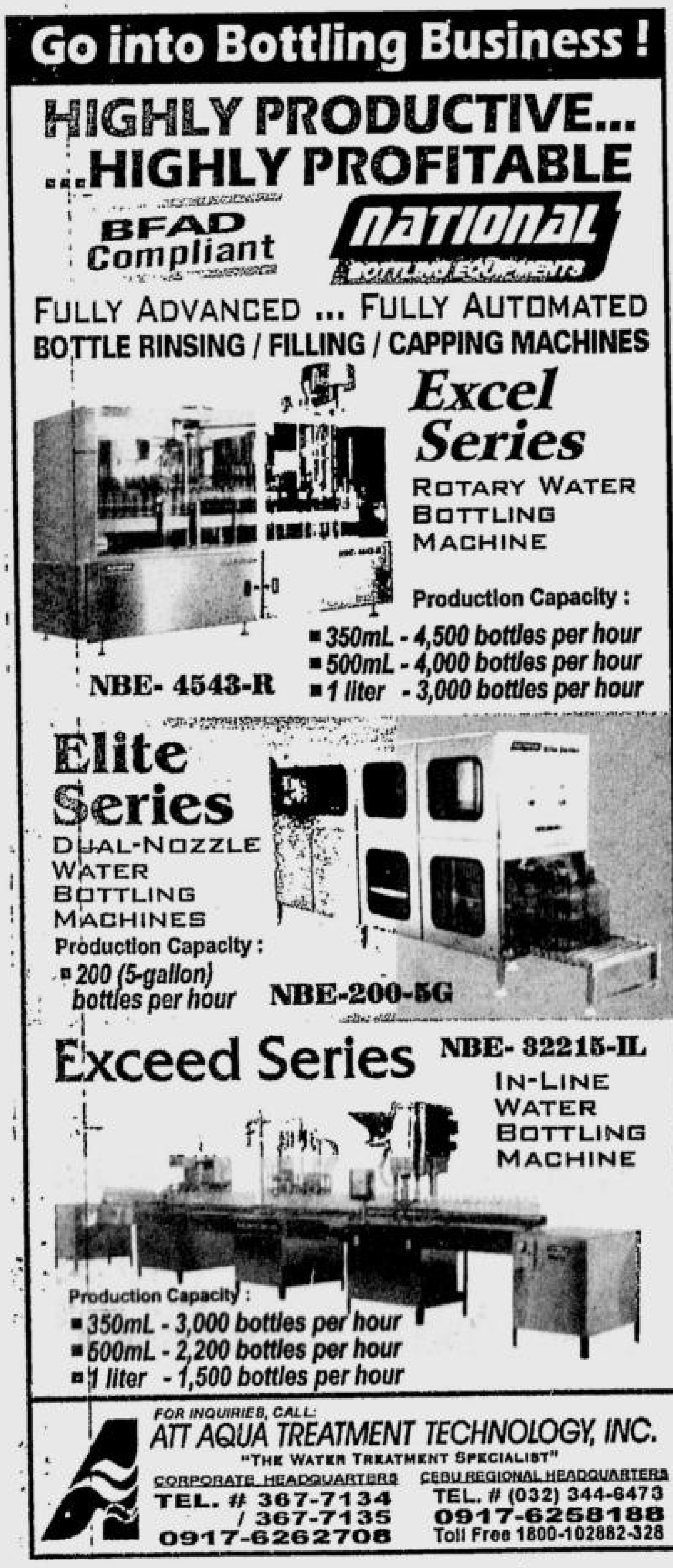

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Ash maker finds deeper ...

From page A1

Manny would be standing by the church entrance, quietly observing parishioners lining up to get their foreheads dabbed with ash.

"It makes me happy to see people going through a ritual where I also played a part," he said in an interview on Sunday. "Ash Wednesday reminds us that we came from ashes and we will return to ashes."

According to the Ministry of Liturgical Affairs of the Archdiocese of Manila, Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the 40-day season of Lent, a period of fasting and abstinence and spiritual discipline. In the Philippines, it is considered the holiest of the liturgical season, ending in Holy Week.

On this day, ashes are blessed and imposed on Catholics, usually during or after Holy Mass. It is also a day of universal fast and abstinence.

Mang Manny knows this only too well, and so two days before Ash Wednesday, he collects dried *palaspas* (palm leaves) blessed on the previous Palm Sunday, puts them in a drum and burns these in the church courtyard during a personal ritual.

The ritual is a sort of thanksgiving, he said, for all the blessings he has received since he left his home province of Aklan some 50 years ago. He would not have survived in Manila had it not been for divine intervention, he said.

In recent years, he said, the collection of dried *palaspas* has decreased, a sign that people were losing their faith or they're not buying palm leaves anymore.

But there's ample stock of much older *palaspas* in the church's warehouse so Mang Manny doesn't worry.

God's blessing

Before burning the heap of dry palms, Mang Manny prays the "Apostles' Creed," "Hail Mary" and "Glory Be." God's blessing is very important even in something as simple as this job.

He lights a match, drops it into the drum, and waits until the fire crackles.

"I don't use gas because it would give the ashes a nauseating smell," he said in Filipino. "Besides, dry palm leaves are easy to ignite."

Mang Manny allows the ashes to cool which usually takes one whole day. Then he filters the heap until only fine ash is left.

"I wouldn't want anyone's forehead accidentally scratched," he said.

Mang Manny also noticed that fewer people remembered Ash Wednesday.

And those who remember don't seem to understand what it's all about, he said.

Runaway

For Mang Manny, Ash Wednesday will never lose its meaning.

"It takes humility for people to acknowledge where they came from and where they will end up," he said.

When Manny was two, his father, a guerrilla who fought the Japanese, disappeared and was later found dead.

When his mother remarried in 1955, he ran away from home. He was 10.

He could not accept his mother's decision to take another husband and never wrote her until he was about to marry, some 20 years later.

Hard life

In Manila, Mang Manny started as a shoe-shine boy until a kind couple from Tondo took him in and treated him as family.

When the couple left for the US, they left their two-story four-bedroom house on Magat Street to Manny, his wife and their five children.

In 1965, he found a job as a bus driver at the University of Santo Tomas. Twenty years later, he moved to the Santissimo Rosario parish chapel where he still works as an all-around employee, driver and "ash maker."

Mang Manny said he was not slowing down, although time has bent his frail 5'6" frame.

"If you dedicate everything to God," he said, "you will never get tired."

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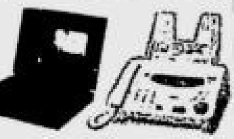
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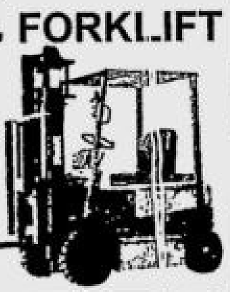
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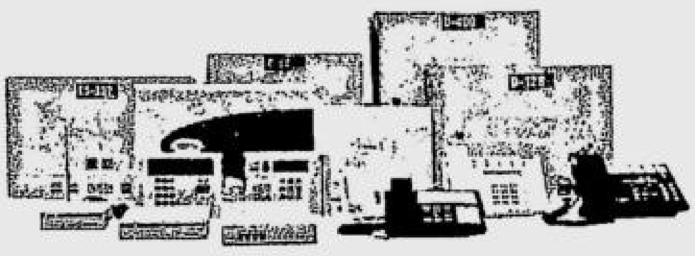
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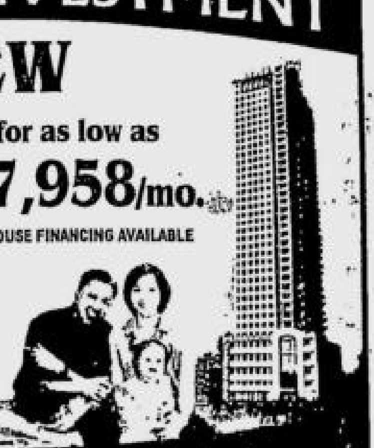
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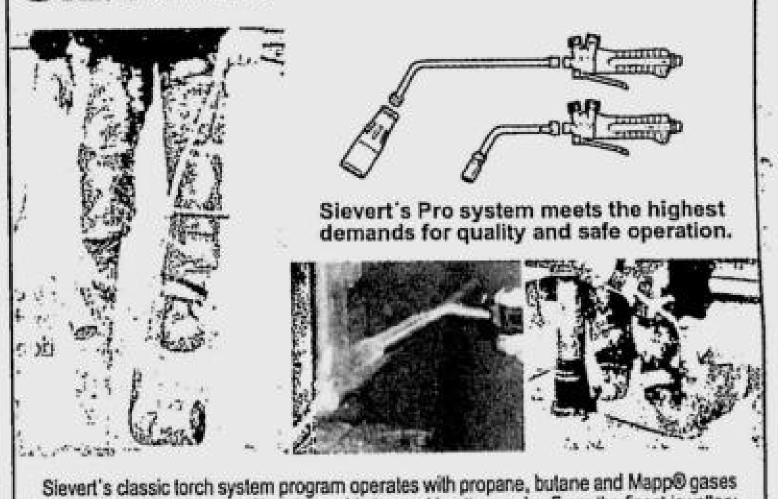
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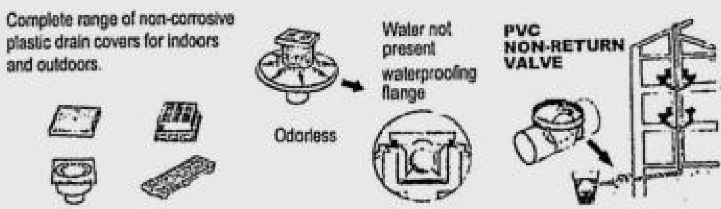
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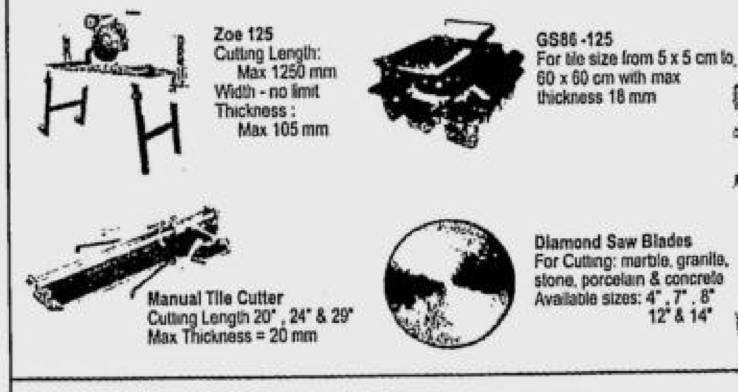
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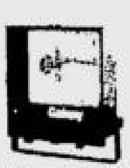
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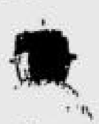
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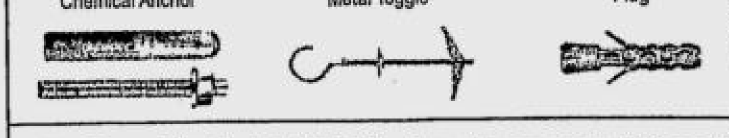
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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Iran to speed up nuke bid if attacked

TEHRAN—Iran would both retaliate and accelerate its drive to master nuclear technology if the United States or Israel attacked its atomic facilities, Iran's chief nuclear negotiator warned on Sunday.

Hassan Rohani, secretary general of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, also said there was nothing the West could offer Tehran that would persuade it to scrap a nuclear program which Washington fears may be used to make bombs.

Asked about a possible attack by the United States or Israel, which have both said a nuclear-armed Iran would be unacceptable, Rohani said: "If such an attack (against Iran's atomic facilities) takes place then of course we will retaliate and we will definitely accelerate our activities to complete our (nuclear) fuel cycle."

Speaking in a rare interview, Rohani said Iran's ability to produce its own nuclear parts had made it "invulnerable" to attack since it could simply rebuild whatever was destroyed.

"But I do not think the United States itself will take such a risk... They know our capabilities for retaliating against such attacks," the mid-ranking cleric added.

Iran has ballistic missiles which can hit Israel and US bases in the Gulf and has vowed to retaliate strongly should either country try to repeat Israel's 1981 successful bombing of Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor.

Iran says its nuclear program will be used to generate electricity, not make bombs. Washington says Tehran is using a civilian nuclear program as a front for weapons development.

US President George W. Bush has refused to rule out military strikes against Iran to prevent it from developing nuclear weapons. But Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said on Friday a US attack was "not on the agenda."

US Vice President Dick Cheney last month warned Israel could in the future try to attack Iran's nuclear facilities.

Israel—believed to be the Middle East's only nuclear armed state—has not said it will attack.

The European Union, led by Britain, Germany and France, is trying to persuade Iran to turn a temporary freeze on sensitive nuclear work, like uranium enrichment, into permanent cessation in return for economic and political incentives.

But Rohani said even the removal of US sanctions on Iran or security guarantees from Washington would not be enough to tempt Tehran to give up its nuclear drive. *Reuters*

Post-poll violence in Iraq: Suicide bombers kill 26

BAGHDAD—Suicide bombers killed at least 26 people in attacks in, two Iraqi cities on Monday, police said, in the worst bloodshed since the country's watershed election.

At least 14 people were killed and 13 were wounded when a suicide car bomb exploded outside a police station in the town of Baquba, northeast of Baghdad.

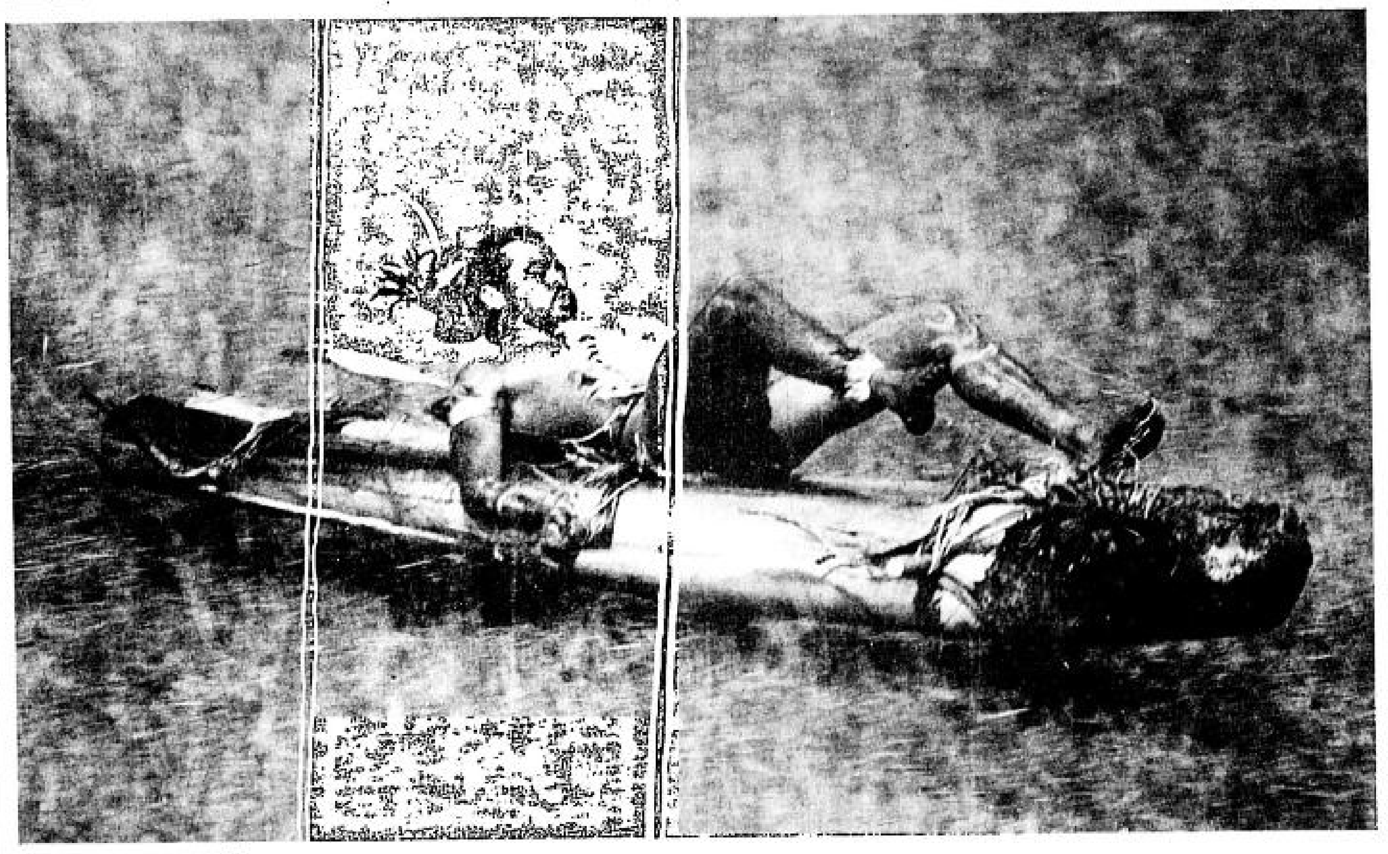
Another 12 died and four were wounded in a blast at a hospital in the northern city of Mosul. Police said it was caused by a suicide bomber although hospital officials initially said it was the result of a mortar attack.

Rabia Yaseen, director general for health in Mosul, said police had been gathering at the rear of the hospital to receive their salaries when the blast tore through the crowd.

A large crater was blown in the road and at least five cars were destroyed. Most, if not all, of the victims were thought to be police officers.

Guerrillas trying to overthrow Iraq's US-backed government have mounted frequent attacks on Iraqi security forces, but failed in their bid to wreck the Jan. 30 election despite sending several suicide bombers to polling centers.

Since then there have been dozens on attacks, but few as deadly as Monday's. *Reuters*



COOL RUNNING

A native Chilean participates in a traditional competition named Haka Pei in which men slide on plantain trucks from Maunga Pui hill at an inclination of 50 degrees, reaching an 80-km-per-hour speed, during the traditional Tapati festival of the Rapanu folklore, in Eastern Island, Chile, Feb. 6. AFP

Britain plans crackdown on illegals

LONDON—The British government will propose an Australian-style points system for migrant workers, seeking to regain the upper hand on an issue that could prove its Achilles heel in an expected May election.

Tony Blair is on track for victory but a poll on Sunday showed an attack by the opposition Conservative Party on what it calls a shambolic asylum and immigration system had struck a chord with the public.

Hitting back, the Labor government will unveil plans on Monday for a points scheme for migrants to screen out unskilled workers and will announce fresh efforts to deport bogus asylum seekers.

"Controlled migration is beneficial to Britain," Blair wrote in an article for Monday's Times newspaper. "However populist it may be, shutting it down would be clearly irresponsible and very quickly deeply damaging to our economy.

Blair said Britain needed to clamp down on those who abuse the system, such as students who apply for non-existent courses.

"We need as well to stop random chain migration—dependants upon dependants; to prevent or penalize sham marriages; to have the power to demand special requirements if applications from particular countries rise significantly; to get after the organized crime that trafficks in people."

Immigration and asylum will be key election battlegrounds.

While most analysts rule out a Conservative election win, success on the issue could help them cut the prime minister's huge parliamentary majority. *Reuters*

RICE

Rice holds talks with Abbas, offers US help

RAMALLAH, West Bank—US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice held talks with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Monday, pledging Washington's support for his efforts to end anti-Israeli violence and institute reforms.

"The Palestinian leadership will have to make some difficult choices to do some hard things concerning security, but they will find very good partners in the international community and the United States will be foremost among them," Rice told Abu Dhabi television before travelling to Ramallah in the West Bank.

On her first visit to the Middle East since taking up her post last month, Rice proposed to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon on Sunday a "security mechanism" that she indicated would involve the United States monitoring a ceasefire accord.

Israel and the Palestinians hope to announce a formal end to more than four years of bloodshed at a summit in Egypt on Tuesday.

The meeting in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh will mark a dramatic return to efforts to get a US-backed peace "road map" back on track. The plan charts mutual steps towards establishment of a Palestinian state alongside a secure Israel.

Rice wants to help Abbas build democratic institutions from Ramallah, where predecessor Yasser Arafat is buried in the Israeli-battered compound in which he was confined until close to his death in November.

Entering the Muqata compound, Rice's motorcade swept past Arafat's tomb without stopping.

The United States shunned Arafat as an obstacle to peace but Rice's visit showed the Bush administration was eager to bolster Abbas with concrete measures to support his efforts to rein in violence since his election last month.

"That will include financial support. It will include political support. It will include training and security. It will include efforts with other parties to get them to be active," she said in the television interview. *Reuters*

Saudi charity complicates tsunami relief work

By Brian Murphy and Mike Casey

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia—A powerful Saudi charity under scrutiny for alleged terrorist financing is expanding operations in tsunami-ravaged areas of Indonesia, importing a hard-line religious message that the West fears could spread extremist Islam in the world's most populous Muslim nation.

The presence of the International Islamic Relief Organization could complicate relief efforts in Indonesia, which is desperate for help but also under pressure to contain Islamic militants after suffering attacks blamed on militants in the past three years that killed more than 200 people.

It also offers a high-profile test of Saudi promises to closely monitor its major aid societies. Many have faced probes as possible back channels for Islamic terrorist groups and vanguards for the kingdom's strict interpretation of Sunni Islam called Wahhabism.

The terrorism money trail is a central topic at an international counterterrorism conference wrapping up Tuesday in the Saudi capital, Riyadh. Delegates from more than 50 nations are expected, including the United States, Iran, many Arab nations and Indonesia.

The International Islamic Relief Organization, or IIRO—one of Saudi Arabia's biggest benevolent groups—has been cleared of any possible terror links by Saudi auditors. But experts who study terrorist financing still raise questions about the group and its parent body, the Muslim World League, which is considered close to the Saudi royal family and propagates Wahhabist Islam around the globe.

"It's a concern when extremist ideologies gain a foothold in places like Indonesia," Juan Zarate, the assistant secretary for terrorist financing at the US treasury department, said. "There is always the potential for the use of extremist ideologies to justify and support terrorist activities."

Many scholars consider Wahhabist beliefs part of the bedrock for Islamic extremism and a guiding force for the Saudi-born al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden. The Dec. 26 tsunami could offer Saudi-style Islam an opportunity to gain ground in Indonesia, where more moderate ideas of faith have dominated.

"There's a religious imperative that comes hand-in-hand with the aid," said Simon Henderson, a researcher specializing in Gulf affairs at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "Anything they put forward that says, 'We are concerned about widows and orphans and that sort of thing,' also must be understood in the bigger context. The (IIRO) is an instrument of Saudi foreign policy."

Suspected beneficiaries of IIRO funds in the past—according to testimony from terrorist analysts before US Senate subcommittees—include the Palestinian faction Hamas, which has carried out most suicide bombings in Israel, and al-Qaida sympathizers in Kashmir, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

The International Crisis Group, a global affairs watchdog, described the IIRO as mostly a "genuine charity" in a 2003 report. But, the report noted, the Saudi group has a questionable past in the region, including allegedly serving as "a cover" for al-Qaida operations in the Philippines, where it was once headed by Bin Laden's brother-in-law, Mohammed Jamal Khalifa.

Victor Comras, a former member of a UN team monitoring al-Qaida, also said that investigators are still studying possible IIRO connections to the Southeast Asian terror network Jemaah Islamiyah—blamed for the Bali nightclub blasts in 2002 that killed 202 people and the bombing of the J.W. Marriott hotel in Jakarta in 2003 that killed 12 people.

Comras urged careful oversight to ensure tsunami aid doesn't drift into radical hands.

"I'm sure their motivations are to help," he said of the IIRO relief work in Indonesia. "But their fundamental purpose is to spread this version of Islam and one of the unintended consequences is the growth and spread of terrorism."

An envoy for the IIRO rejected any terrorist links. He described the main work in the tsunami zone as purely humanitarian: providing food, caring for orphans and rebuilding mosques—drawing parallels with other faith-based aid groups such as Christian groups.

The group said there was no plans to bring in Islamic clerics from Saudi Arabia, but didn't rule out offering religious assistance in the future.

"At this time, they need relief not religion," Fahd Al Harbi said as he waited for the arrival of a top delegation from the Saudi Red Crescent Society in Banda Aceh, a hub for interna- [illegible] the [illegible] if they need (religious-related help) we will provide it."

FORMER Miss World and Indian queen of Bollywood, Aishwarya Rai, performs at the "Help Telethon Concert" in aid of tsunami victims in Bombay, early Feb. 7. AFP

Al Harbi also insisted terrorism was deplored by the IIRO, which has been active in Indonesia since 1993 and spends about $1 million (euro771,700) a year.

"(Critics) always accuse us of being a terrorist organization. But there is no evidence of this," Al Harbi said. "They will not find anything. We've never given money for anything but orphanages and for mosques."

At least one other Saudi-based charity, the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, is active in Indonesia's devastated Aceh province. The group has been accused by Israel of alleged financial links to Hamas. US Sen. Charles Schumer, a New York Democrat, has called for a similar probe of the assembly's US branch, which was once run by Bin Laden's nephew Abdullah. The group denies any support for terrorist groups. *AP*

Thai PM Thaksin creates history, raises concerns

By Ed Cropley

BANGKOK—Billionaire. Tycoon. Populist.

Crony capitalist. Autocrat.

The labels critics assign to Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra are many, and mostly unflattering.

But as a second historic election landslide hands one of Thailand's richest men an unprecedented exclusive grip on power, the term being bandied about most is "dictator."

Thaksin, a self-styled "CEO premier" for whom strong government is effective government, views the jibe as undeserved.

"Where in the world is a single-party government called a dictatorship? What's wrong with it when people have faith in me?" he told supporters at a mass rally in central Bangkok at the climax of his 2005 campaign.

Love him or loathe him, no one can avoid the fact that Thaksin, the only elected prime minister in Thailand's coup-prone history to finish a full four-year term, is here to stay.

Even his harshest critics concede the 55-year-old has managed to make good on most of the populist platform of free health care and handouts for the rural masses that swept him to power in 2001.

With an uncanny ability to milk successes and slide out of messes, as well as a buzzing economy that has shaken off the impact of SARS, bird flu, violence in the Muslim south and the Dec. 26 tsunami, his popularity has rarely dipped below the stratosphere.

Born into a family of ethnic Chinese silk merchants in 1949 in the northern city of Chiang Mai, Thaksin became a policeman in 1973 before winning a state scholarship to study for a masters degree in criminal justice at Eastern Kentucky University.

THAKSIN

He earned a doctorate in the same subject from Sam Houston State University in Texas five years later and then taught at the Thai Police Cadet Academy, a vocation that many say explains his tough stance on law and order.

However, he quit the force in 1987 to go into business, establishing a small computer dealership with his wife Potjaman that started selling hardware to the Thai police force.

The company evolved into present-day Shin Corp, a telecoms conglomerate now worth $2.6 billion on the Thai stock market, with interests ranging from mobile phones to satellites, the Internet and the media.

Wealthy beyond his dreams—Forbes magazine estimates his family fortune at $1.4 billion—Thaksin resigned from every position in his telecoms empire before becoming foreign minister in 1994. *Reuters*

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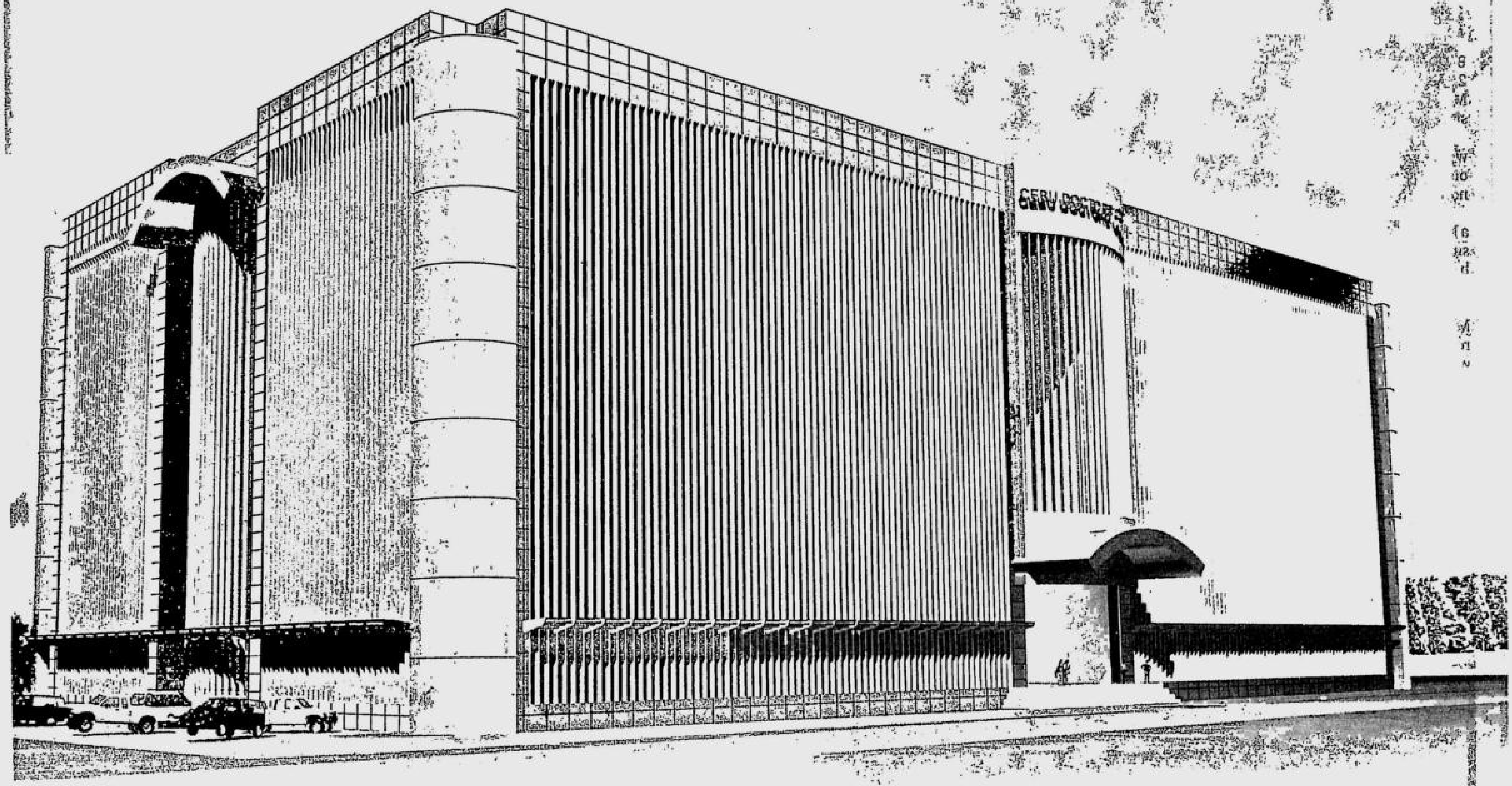
CEBU DOCTORS' UNIVERSITY

Cebu Boardwalk, Mandaue Reclamation Area, Cebu

The Investiture of the First President of Cebu Doctors' University, DR. POTENCIANO VELOSO LARRAZABAL, JR. will be held at the Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral today, February 8, 2005 at two o'clock in the afternoon. The ceremonies will be graced by CHED Commissioners, members of the academe, representatives from the government service and friends.

Dr. Potenciano V. Larrazabal, Jr. has made the history of Cebu Doctors' College now Cebu Doctors' University. His long years of dedicated service to the College has been enriched with remarkable achievements directed to the improvement of health services in the country. Starting with the building of Cebu Doctors' Hospital in Cebu City, the Mactan Doctors' Hospital in Lapu-Lapu City, North General Hospital in Talamban, Cebu City, San Carlos Doctors' Hospital in San Carlos City, Negros Occidental and South General Hospital in Naga, Cebu, his desire to serve mankind has become a reality.



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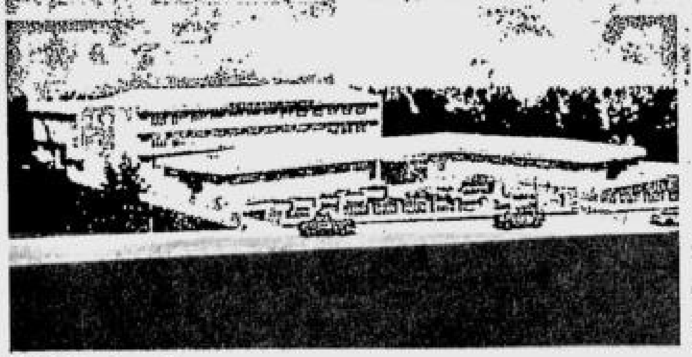

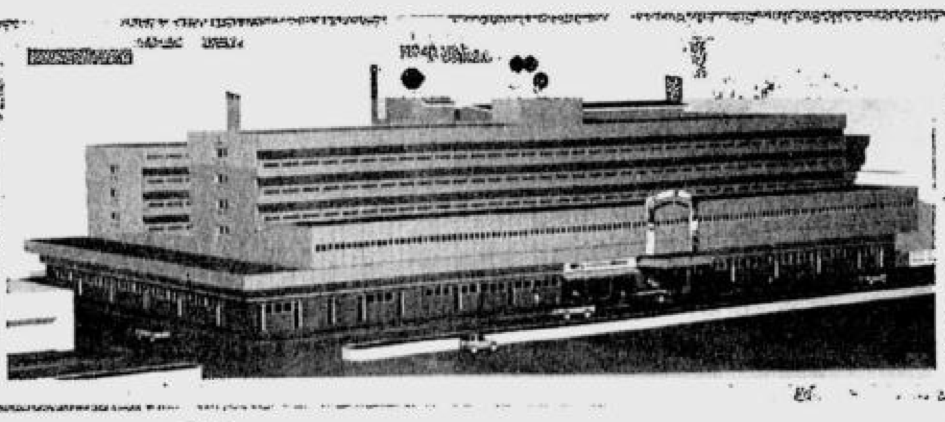

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CEBU
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NEWS
CEBU'S ONLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

The fastest-growing regional paper in the Visayas marks its 7th anniversary today with the groundbreaking of its new home in the North Reclamation Area, Cebu City. The Print Town Building will house the new offices of Cebu Daily News, the Inquirer Visayas Bureau and the printing presses of Print Town.

RIO CARNIVAL
A performer from the Unidos da Tijuca samba school dances in Rio de Janeiro's premier Carnival parade Feb. 7. Rio de Janeiro erupted to the beat of drums on Sunday night as dancers from the city's samba schools showed off their skills to win what promised to be the most expensive carnival yet. REUTERS

Spain gov't offers amnesty to 800,000 illegal migrants

MADRID—Spain's Socialist government offers an amnesty to hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants from Monday despite concerns it could make Spain an even more attractive destination for migrants.

Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero's government says the amnesty will allow it to manage migration. However, its assurances have done nothing to quell the controversy.

Spain is the main gateway to Europe for illegal immigrants.

An estimated 800,000 migrants live in the country illegally, but there is no way to know how many will benefit from the amnesty.

The scale of the problem was underlined on Saturday when Spanish authorities rescued 227 African would-be migrants from a decrepit fishing boat drifting off the Canary Islands.

Jose Manuel Soria, head of the local authority in the island of Gran Canaria, wrote in the conservative ABC newspaper on Sunday that the incident showed the drawing power of the amnesty offer—even though new arrivals cannot qualify.

"The irresponsible announcement of papers for everyone redoubles the risk and the ingenuity of the clandestine expeditions," said Soria, a member of the opposition Popular Party which has roundly criticized the amnesty.

El Mundo newspaper said in an opinion piece that it was no coincidence that Spain was facing an influx of immigrants from Africa and of east European migrants through the Pyrenees in the days before the amnesty took effect.

The amnesty is an attempt to recognize that thousands of migrants are already working illegally without paying taxes or joining the social security system.

It is also underpinned by a desire to keep a closer eye on foreigners after the al-Qaida-linked bombings that killed 191 people on March 11 last year.

Most of the Islamic militants accused of carrying out the attacks were born in Morocco and many of the victims were also immigrants.

To qualify, migrants must have an identity document, prove they were in Spain before last August, have a job contract for at least the next six months and have no criminal record.

Some 160 Social Security offices throughout Spain will open in the evening for the next three months to accept applications for residence and work permits, the government said on Sunday. *Reuters*

18 friends die in gas leak

CASTELLON, Spain—Spain was in mourning Monday after 18 people were killed in their sleep by a gas leak after spending all night celebrating a birthday in a mountain lodge in the east of the country.

Officials said there were only two survivors from the group who stayed the night at the San Christobal inn in the village of Todolella, in eastern Spain.

Several political parties quickly announced the suspension on Monday of campaigning for a referendum on the EU constitution, as a mark of respect to the dead.

It was the worst such accident in Spain in more than a decade, according to emergency workers.

Local officials said the victims ranged in age from 17 to 40, most of them friends.

Ximo Puig, the mayor of Morella, the biggest town in the Comarca district where the tragedy occurred, said that the youngest victim was a member of a five-piece band playing at the function who had come in as a last-minute replacement. He said he believed the other members of the band had also died.

Two people were said to have suffered serious injuries in the suspected gas leak, the details of which were under investigation.

Preliminary investigations suggested a butane gas container had either leaked or been improperly closed, causing carbon monoxide poisoning.

The firm Pepsol Butane rushed experts to the scene.

The two survivors, who were sleeping further away from the gas leak than the others, were found unconscious and taken to hospital. *AFP*

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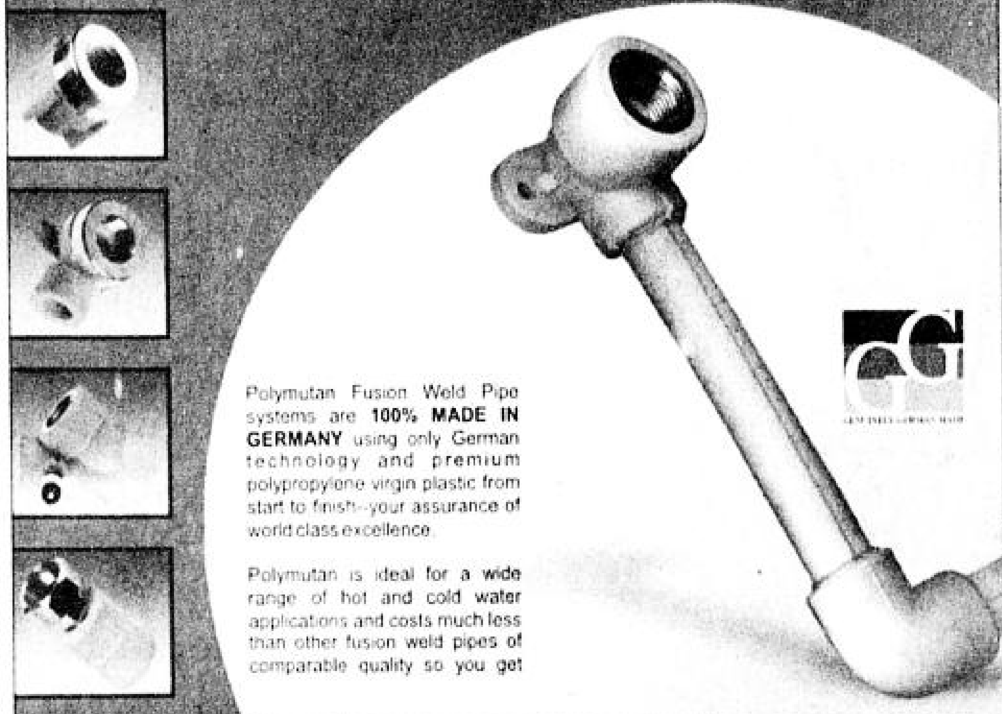

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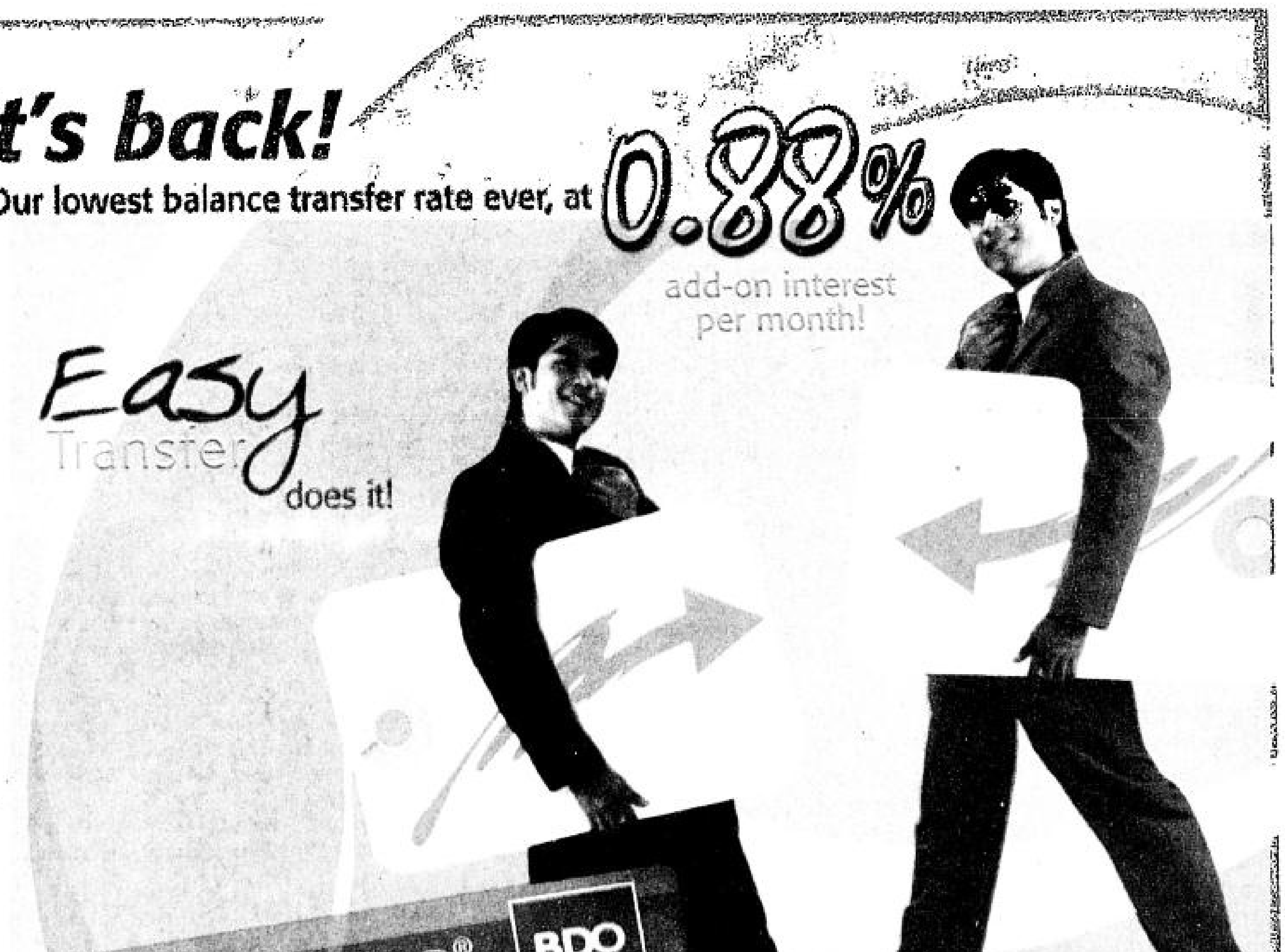

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OPINION

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The greatest moral issue

EDITORIAL

LAST Friday in London, on the eve of a meeting of the leaders of the world's richest nations, former South African president Nelson Mandela demanded freedom for the millions of "slaves" of poverty all over the world. He said, "Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural."

Mandela said poverty is man-made and can be eradicated by the actions of human beings. "And overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice," he said.

To the credit of many of the world's leaders, they recognize that poverty is the No. 1 economic, social and political issue of our times. At the recent annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, for instance, nearly 65 percent of the 700 economic, political, intellectual and cultural leaders of the world chose to make poverty the No. 1 item on the agenda.

At the Global Town Hall that started this year's WEF meeting, participants said that the problem of poverty is fundamental to everything, and that alleviating poverty would reduce terrorism and instability. Indeed, if the poor nations could be put on the road to progress and prosperity, much of the instability that prevails in the world today could be reduced.

The talk at Davos, surprisingly, did not consist of glittering generalizations and empty rhetoric. In line with this year's motto, "Taking Responsibility for Tough Choices," the world leaders made concrete proposals. British Prime Minister Tony Blair committed the United Kingdom to treble its aid to Africa, the poorest continent in the world, and to insure that aid is more effectively administered.

President Jacques Chirac of France called on the developed countries to fulfill as soon as possible pledges made two decades ago to devote 0.7 percent of their gross domestic product to aid for poor nations.

Australian Prime Minister John Howard said that the single biggest contribution the developed world could make to poverty alleviation was to break down trade barriers. "Trade access is worth far more to underdeveloped countries than development assistance," he said.

Celebrity made its power felt in Davos, and not only did the celebrities focus attention on the problem of poverty, they raised funds to help alleviate it. For instance, there was Sharon Stone of "Basic Instinct" fame, who suddenly stood up during a discussion on the funding of the war on poverty to say that she was donating $10,000 to combat malaria in Tanzania whose president, Benjamin Mkapa, was one of the panel speakers.

Stone urged the participants to stand up and pledge donations. At the end of the discussion, organizers said they had raised $1 million in pledges. Previously, Bill Gates of Microsoft gave $750 million to vaccinate children all over the world against deadly diseases.

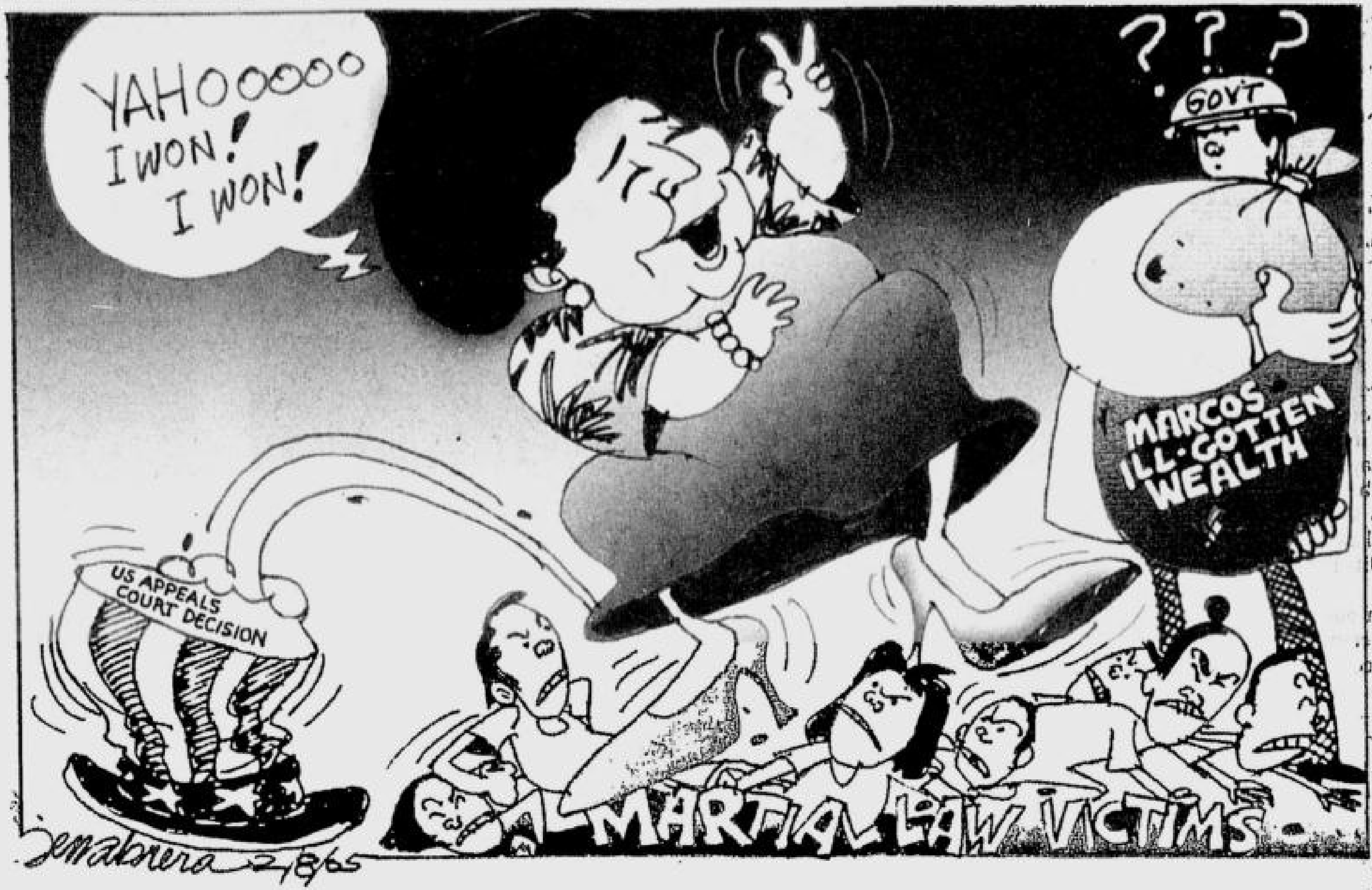
Before the meeting closed, it approved the creation of a fund to accelerate financial aid to the poorest nations and the removal of trade barriers that deprive poor countries of the dividends of global economic growth.

The recently concluded World Economic Forum at Davos stressed the need to address the problem of worldwide poverty before it explodes and causes greater misery and instability. The rich nations—the United States first among them—have to make hard decisions—decisions that will call for the expenditure of huge sums in aid and may work against their economic interests—to reduce the problem of poverty.

Right now, about 800 million people all over the world go hungry every day, according to the Global Governance Initiative Annual Report. We cannot imagine people of the rich nations going to bed every night without a twinge of conscience, without giving a thought to the 800 million of their fellow human beings who are hungry and destitute and deprived.

Unless the problem of poverty is relieved soon, the eventuality that President Jacques Chirac warned of in a special message to the Forum could come to pass. Chirac warned that the young people of the developing world could rise in revolt if the rich countries do not provide hope for a better future, by offering them a way out of the grinding poverty in which hundreds of millions live in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Which brings us back to Mandela, who said that "while poverty exists there is no true freedom." He said that overcoming poverty is an act of justice. But poverty is not only an issue that involves the economy, geopolitics, social classes or justice. Above all, it is a moral issue; it is perhaps the greatest moral issue of our times. It is a test of the humanness and humane-ness of people and nations who can do something to alleviate poverty and yet do nothing because of miserliness, selfishness or self-interest.



Reverse bumper harvest

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

THERE are awards, and awards. But for sheer brazenness, hand it to Cebu City's Mayor Tomas Osmeña.

For the Charter Day rites on Feb. 24, Osmeña has handpicked 18 awardees. He included his controversial close-in security guard, SPO1 Adonis Dumpit, necklaced with three killing cases before the Ombudsman.

Dumpit will get a P50,000 prize in taxpayers' money, too.

"I'll accept it, as I need the cash for my cases," said the man who has been unfairly dubbed, Osmeña protests, as a salvage cop.

The mayor sprang Dumpit from jail to "train police in marksmanship." He'll be cited alongside President Macapagal-Arroyo, NGOs, a university, a producer of Visayan films, plus a clutch of Osmeña loyalists.

The city will honor the President for her concern for Cebu, Osmeña explained, but she'll not get "a cash incentive." Instead, they'll go to police officials who haven't solved 21 summary executions, by a shadowy *escuadrones de la muerte*.

The P50,000 is the least of Ms Arroyo's concerns. But will the President agree to stand, cheek-by-jowl, alongside Osmeña's gunslinger in the controversy over vigilante rub-outs?

Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and other groups have protested against the salvaging. The most searing indictment came from the Philippine Jesuit Prison Service Foundation, which has opened a farm and livelihood center for former prisoners.

"Crime committed to stop crime makes no sense," said Fr. Victor Labao, SJ, who founded the multi-purpose coop. "Nobody was born a criminal. It is a sick society that breeds criminals."

Osmeña endorsed the ex-prisoners' farm and washed his hands of death squads. "I may have inspired them," he shrugs. Nonetheless, he allocated P20,000 for every criminal "neutralized" or "permanently disabled."

The known body count is 21. So, has he disbursed P420,000 for scalp bounties? Who received the blood money? Did that come from the P3-million intelligence fund that the President authorized? Or did businessmen, as Cebu Daily News' Raymond Fernandez fear, chip in secretly.

"Time was when Charter Day awards were cherished by recipients," wrote Sun Star's Bong Wenceslao. Today, they've "acquired the sheen of plaques sold on the sidewalks." One-man choices, they reflect Osmeña's "eccentricities."

Complaints over the depreciation of the awards are of long standing. "Values that transcend narrow frontiers and selfless service to others characterize honors by the Magsaysay Foundation, Silliman University or Mother Teresa awards," the Cebu Daily News noted in Aug. 29, 2001. But "raw politics underpins the Osmeña trophies." This year's "murder-with-a-wink" exacerbated the decay.

Awards from the Nobel or Magsaysay Foundations, in contrast, follow established criteria. They're applied by a non-partisan board of eminent persons. That establishes credibility.

To see the difference, scan the list of awardees. Nobel Laureates include Rudyard Kipling, Ireland's George Bernard Shaw; Doctors without Frontiers, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Burma's Aung San Su Kyi and Kenyan environmentalist Wangrai Maathai.

On the home front, the over 239 Asians and institutions honored with Magsaysay Awards include Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide, graft buster Haydee Yorac, the Bayanihan Folk Arts Center and Thailand's Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

Osmeña also tickled the public with his attempt to clone Harvard University's Lampoon. He dumped his *kalabasa* (squash) awards on unpopular agencies like PAL for late flights, telecom companies for texting charges, etc.

Founded in 1876 by seven Harvard undergraduates, Lampoon modeled itself on Punch, the British humor magazine. It's parodies of Playboy, New Yorker and J.R.R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" won a following. Osmeña initially did too with his squashes.

Mocking praise is legal. Filipinos are gluttons for the spoof. Remember those wisecracks about Jose Velarde, Jose Pidal and now Generals Garcia and Ligot? Satire is a legitimate tool in a democracy. It can wring accountability from officials. "Parody is a game but satire is a lesson," Vladimir Nabokov said.

"Osmeña inflicts his trophy on those who the mayor, by his lonesome, claims don't serve Cebu well," Cebu Daily News noted in its "Pot to the kettle" editorial. "They pander to what is popular at the moment—and thereby boost his sagging political stock."

But scandals and crass misgovernance have sapped the regime's credibility. His imploding yen loans strapped constituents with the country's heftiest foreign IOU. Every man, woman and child within the city must repay P60,654 each. He windowdressed a P4.3-billion debt by P1.52 billion, the Commission on Audit complained.

This merits a jumbo *kalabasa* award. So does his buying second-dump trucks disguised as brand new. His city is over-pumping, by over 150,000 cubic meters daily, its strained aquifers. And 29 percent of children, in the city, suffer from iodine deficiency while 34 percent lack Vitamin A.

Osmeña has "policy black holes" on food security, sewerage, nutrition, transport, pollution, migration, schools, out of school youth, Cebu Daily News noted in its commentary, "Makalusot governance." "This vacuum provides temporary sanctuary from accountability—but a reverse bumper harvest of kalabasa."

Vigilantes running riot will add one more squash.

Mirrors

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

"SOME people have been asking me who've signed up with us, half-hoping I'd mention some big names. Well, we don't have big names. Who cares about big names?"

That was what Nandy Pacheco, a youthful idealist at 72, told me when I saw him last week. Pacheco isn't just the prime exponent of the Gunless Society in this country, he is the prime exponent of a new kind of politics in this country. He is the head of Kapatiran, a political party that was launched in 2003 but wasn't able to field candidates in the elections last year for lack of time—and recruits.

It's not easy being an entrant to the cause, at least as far as the current expectations of people who want to go into politics go. To do so, you must first forswear the "pork barrel," the very reason people want to become congressman to begin with. The one has become almost synonymous with the other: Congressmen are people who hold on if not to the actual monies to be disbursed to their pet projects at least to the power to determine what those pet projects would be and who gets to carry them out. The last normally consists of friends and relations.

I'll just put down a few of the other controversial things the party stands for and expects members to obey religiously. Under "political platform": "abolish all forms of gambling, whether run by government or the private sector," "abolish the death penalty," "end fraternity violence in schools." Under "social dimension": "abolish the 'pork barrel' system," "make it a criminal offense for anyone to carry a gun or any other deadly weapon in public places," "end the practice of appointing former military officers as secretary of national defense," "disallow elected and appointed public officials from writing regular columns, acting in movies and TV shows, and acting as commentators or anchorpersons on radio and TV, and appearing on TV and radio commercials and print advertisements and billboards." There's more, but you get the drift.

Your first reaction is to smile bemusedly and wonder if you can count the prospective members of the group beyond the fingers of your hands. Your second reaction is to wonder why that is your first reaction. Because to see this as the product of naïvete or a loose hold on the realities of this society must eventually reflect on what you take to be sophistication and accept as the necessary conditions of your political or social life. Or put another way, to see this as a pipe dream is to show what you accept as the terms of your waking hours.

In fact, Kapatiran is another one of those trick mirrors this country is full of that seemingly reflect things in fantastic ways but really reveal huge kernels of truth in them. What makes Kapatiran for instance bizarre as a political party is that it acts as a political party in the sense that the truly democratic, or plain civilized, countries do, but which this country clearly does not.

In other countries, people join political parties. In this country, political parties join people. In other countries, political parties are bigger than their members; they have a life of their own that goes on long after individual members have come and gone. In this country members are bigger than their parties and parties rise and fall depending on the fortunes of those who head them. In other countries, voters vote for which political party can best deliver the things they need. In this country, voters vote for which candidate can best sing the songs they want. Now, which is really perverse—party like Pacheco's, or a politics like ours?

I've said it before: the thing that really needs changing is not this country's Charter but this country's party system. We never develop any real political party, one that stands for something other than a springboard for the ragged ambitions of a "presidentiable" or "prime-ministeriable," and no amount of Charter change will rescue us from silliness or despair. But that's another story.

As to Kapatiran's agenda, you may disagree with it, or some of it, but to see it as something totally unrealistic is again to wonder what you accept, or have come to accept, as possible. Why should we naturally find reasonable the idea that no politician in his right mind will run for anything other than personal gain, or in this case for the institutionalized tribute or *balato* known as pork barrel? Why should we not demand from public servants an overriding desire to render public service?

The Kapatiran motto is "Common good is common sense," and it does make sense. If I recall right, that was what Russell Crowe as John Nash proposed in "A Beautiful Mind": Everyone looks out for himself, everyone loses. Everyone looks after the group, everyone gets laid. What applies to getting laid as an individual applies to getting ahead as a nation. Well, if I recall right again, Nash was thought of as a crackpot. Which he partly was, but that, too, is another story.

You'll hear no end of groans and sighs from Filipinos today despairing of this country ever getting better. This country has become so miserable, the refrain goes, but there is no alternative in the horizon. GMA sucks but Erap, who proposes to dislodge her in turn, does so even more. Well, alternatives are strange creatures. We've never really lacked for them, we've always had them. What we've always lacked is the wit to recognize them when they present themselves. Or this country has become so Alice-in-Wonderland-ish, so topsy-turvy, we find sanity parochial and hustling cosmopolitan. What we've always lacked is the will to do them, saying to ourselves life is impossible on this soil, only death flourishes. Better to live in America

Who really is the crackpot in this case?

Opening ARMM's window to the world

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

EVEN as the debate rages between pro-mining advocates and the minority opposed to any kind of mining by foreign companies here, there's talk that some local executives are already making overtures to make a quick buck from the mining companies. This is one problem the administration must tackle right at the start of this "new deal" for the industry. These local officials could turn off the foreign capitalists.

* * *

Some bishops have expressed a negative view on the entry of foreign investors into mining. But the question is, what's their alternative to the grinding poverty in the rural areas and the lack of development and work opportunities there? In the belly of the earth under this country lies an enormous wealth of minerals, whose extraction could free our people from the bondage of poverty. Our local capitalists don't have the capacity to tap these minerals, so we need foreign investors. This doesn't have to be an "either-or" kind of thing. The government can let the foreign capitalists in, but it must regulate their activities in relation to capital repatriation and responsible mining so that the Filipino people, the real owners of this wealth, will come out from the mining deal a clear winner. To close one's mind to this reality is to be anti-Filipino.

* * *

In our recent dzRH interviews with Education Secretary Florencio Abad and Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo, they stressed the crucial role that the private sector is playing in support of their agencies—helping them lick the problems of ignorance, poor education, and graft and corruption. One non-government organization in the education field is the Knowledge Channel Foundation, Inc. (KCFI) which operates the Knowledge Channel (KCh), the only curriculum-based educational TV in the country. Two weeks ago, KCFI's president, Rina Lopez-Bautista (daughter of Lopez Group's chair Oscar Lopez and the former Connie Prieto) invited a big group of Manila media to witness the inauguration of its pilot project, in the town of Datu Paglas in Maguindanao, in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The project involved the installation of an ETV facility in a public school in that town, the first of 154 schools in ARMM's five provinces. KCFI aims to hook up the schools to the KCh's ETV over the next three years.

* * *

Unfortunately, I was unable to join the media group for that trip to ARMM. I was fascinated, nonetheless, by the idea that in the heart of one of the country's poorest and least developed regions (the battleground of conflicting ideologies), the public school kids—and just as important, their teachers—will have access to cable and satellite TV systems showing curriculum-based, educational TV programs. This means they will have a window to the world—a window previously denied ARMM kids—that will usher the backward region into the 21st century and help bridge the knowledge divide in our age of information and technology.

* * *

Cecile and I invited Rina Bautista and KCFI's resource mobilization directress, Doris Nuval-Baffrey, who's also the project head of KCFI's "Team Mindanao," to our dzRH show (aired this Sunday at 9:15 p.m.). We learned that KCFI, now on its fifth year, is the only curriculum-based ETV and its cable TV programs and modules reach more than 2.4 million Filipino students in over 1,400 public schools in all regions, except Region 8. The projects are undertaken with about 15 "alliance partners," not the least of them the US-AID, which is funding KCFI's ARMM project as part of the US agency's $33 million program for the upliftment of Muslim Mindanao. Rina stressed that KCFI has an integrated approach to its ARMM project, e.g., Petron Foundation is installing KCh in its schools, while the 100-member Philippine Cable TV Association has waived subscription fees for the use of cable facilities. KCFI has a 10-year agreement with the DepED for mandatory viewing by students and teachers of KCh modules, with its ARMM office helping out in the selection of beneficiary schools and teacher trainees.

* * *

My association with Doris Baffrey dates back to the early Edsa years when I hosted a talk show over the old PTV-4. But Cecile has known Doris far earlier—she used to act in Cecile's plays. During the Marcos era, she surfaced in the US where the Alvarezes had earlier gone into self-exile. Doris got involved in the "Light A Fire Movement," which was credited with the PICC bombing during a big travel convention in the martial law days.

Last year, Doris disappeared again, and it's only now that we learned that she has gotten involved in "Team Mindanao," and she has relocated to Cotabato City. Judging from the way she looks, she is very happy working with Mindanao youths who are overaged for school due to the conflict there. Doris speaks of the ARMM kids squatting on the floor in what passes for schools, because there are no desks. *"Grabe,"* she says, adding that in the next three years, Team Mindanao hopes to increase "local-level opportunities and conditions in ARMM, especially for reintegrating the out-of-school youths in conflict-affected areas, so that hopefully they would cease to entertain prospects of joining up with dissident groups."

* * *

The Assumption- and De La Salle University-educated Rina Bautista, a wife and mother of two children, is appealing for support of KCFI projects. How much does it take to support an ETV project? In a cable area, it will cost P75,000. If a satellite dish has to be installed, it will run up to P125,000. This is a project I'd endorse, if only to help open up areas darkened by ignorance and illiteracy.

Covering Baron and Richard

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

TWO news stories would have simply landed in the "roundup" of the crime and police beat, if at all, had they not involved young male actors. The stories ranked fairly high in the TV news lineups in the days leading up to "Media Nation 2," a summit of Philippine media practitioners held over the weekend.

One story involved Baron Geisler, a former child actor who has made the transition to teen roles. He was haled to a police precinct after his vehicle collided with another. It wasn't the collision, though, that was newsworthy, but rather actor's behavior. A TV footage showed an obviously drunk Geisler.

The other story featured Richard Gutierrez, perhaps the most popular among today's teen stars, who was accused of punching an alleged "gatecrasher" at his recent birthday party.

Adding spice to the match-up of these stories is that Geisler and Gutierrez are contract stars of the country's biggest TV networks which have been embroiled in years of heated competition. It thus became of particular interest to viewers how the news directors of both ABS-CBN and GMA-7 would handle the stories that put their home studio talents in not-so-flattering light.

On the evening the story on Geisler's accident broke, "24 Oras," GMA-7's primetime newscast, not only included the story among its lead-ins, it also gave it prominent play, airing the report early in the program and giving it generous airtime. "Mom, let's check out Channel 2 and see how they cover this story!" my teen-age daughter urged, smelling a media dust-up in the making. Disappointingly, neither "TV Patrol," the primetime newscast, nor "Inside Story," which airs late in the evening, carried the story.

Geisler eventually did make an appearance on the station's news shows, but a day later, by which time he was sober and sufficiently contrite.

Was it a case of self-interest overruling sound news judgment? Did the ABS-CBN Talent Center, to which Geisler belongs, flex its damage-control muscles?

* * *

ACCORDING to someone fairly high in the Channel 2 news organization, the explanation is more innocent and much less sensational than one would suppose.

"Our reporter had the footage," said the news executive, who looked into the matter. Unfortunately, the reporter failed to sign in the story and footage in the station's logbook, on which news decision-makers in all the network stations base their lineups. "I really felt bad, because the footage was really fascinating," the news executive remarked.

You can choose to believe the explanation or not. But both ABS-CBN and GMA-7 news executives should be aware by now that when it comes to covering stories that bear on the interests of their owners and talents, the "market" is more aware of possible bias than is supposed.

The Richard Gutierrez "assault" story is a graphic example. ABS-CBN covered the fracas but devoted more time to interviewing his alleged victim. GMA-7, on the other hand, focused on airing Gutierrez's explanation, and that of his mother and friends, for the incident.

Channel 7, of course, could have chosen to simply ignore the story. After all, Gutierrez is an important talent. When I congratulated GMA-7 news anchor Mike Enriquez for carrying the story, which involved a big star of the station, he retorted: "What do you mean, a 'big star'? He's the station's major star!"

* * *

DOUBTLESS, many of you are asking by now if you should even care about these stories, much less about how they were handled.

The breaching of the once-impregnable line between news and public affairs and entertainment is often seen as the reason for the "dumbing down" of public debate, as well as the emergence of that bastardized creature known as "infotainment." Media owners often justify the dilution of traditional news and public affairs content by saying they are only giving the public "what they want," having learned that it doesn't pay to give the public "what they need." Gabby Lopez, ABS-CBN chair and CEO, in his address to "Media Nation 2," referred to the tendency of news consumers to "watch news with the heart rather than the head" by asking: "Would we rather talk of VAT or what happens to Lucy Torres?"

Magpakatotoo tayo. Between value-added taxes and gossip about the "klepto" tendencies of a celebrity, wouldn't we rather go with where the gossip takes us?

* * *

CERTAINLY the highlights of the first day's sessions of "Media Nation 2" were the back-to-back addresses by the owners of the country's broadcast giants, Lopez of ABS-CBN and lawyer Felipe Gozon of GMA-7. Both were candid and spoke bluntly to their audience of media practitioners about the conflict between their mandate to create profit for their investors and their duty as media managers.

"It's difficult to be optimistic about responsible journalism in a competitive setting," Lopez admitted. "If your company doesn't sell, it will have to stop operations," added Gozon.

While both confessed to seeking "balance" between corporate profits and social responsibility, they were equally blunt about how, given the market they operate in, news and public affairs are now judged by the same yardstick—ratings—as are all the shows in the entertainment jumble.

This wasn't always so. Airtime for news and public affairs shows was once viewed as the "fee" a network pays the government in exchange for the broadcast franchise granted it. It was this arrangement that allowed news and public affairs departments to remain faithful to their mandate to gather, disseminate and analyze the news "without fear or favor." The same mandate holds, even if this news is about contract stars; but it becomes more difficult in a setting where ratings hold sway.

Not again!

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

YOU won't believe it, but they're at it again. (I once referred to them as "black dwarfs" and got a resounding protest about racial slurs, so now we'll just name names.) Some years back, there was a hue and a cry among idiots concerned with issues like conserving the environment, saving Manila Bay (one of those lost causes as you can see), restoring old buildings or trying to save them when the Department of Public Works and Highways started constructing this monstrous bridge across the Loboc River in Bohol.

To be fair, we're short on infrastructure, so this wasn't necessarily a bad thing except that this rather ugly structure (okay, okay so it's a matter of taste) was going to end up slicing the 200-year-old Loboc church right down its middle. Not only that, all that pounding was weakening its foundations. Happily, Mr. Toledo (I think that was his name) saw the light just like St. Paul and stopped the construction. I understand it has been christened something like "Tommy's folly" and it stands there unfinished—a monument to government's incapacity to understand anything that isn't concerned with pork barrel and the like. Although it defiles the bucolic landscape, it apparently can't be demolished because it would cost several million pesos to do so. (Maybe they can bomb it?)

Having breathed a sigh of relief since there are so few victories in this arena, it turns out the DPWH is at it again. This time it's the town of Baclayon in Bohol. (What's with this island anyway?) Nine homeowners of ancestral homes sent a letter last January to the regional director of the Environment Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources based in Cebu, protesting a road-widening project that would result in partial or full destruction of their houses even though they had been "assured by Gov. Eric Aumentado that none of the ancestral homes in Baclayon will be demolished to give way to the widening project. However, in a meeting yesterday with the DPWH in the municipal hall of Baclayon, we have been informed that the ancestral homes will have to be destroyed."

Seeing that they were getting nowhere despite several letters to the DENR, they've even written to President Macapagal-Arroyo asking her to intervene, explaining that "Baclayon is the oldest cabisera in the heritage province of Bohol" (not that the DPWH gives two hoots about heritage issues) and that even part of the belfry of the church complex would be affected.

Obviously no one is against progress or modernization, but these townspeople feel that the tangible heritage affected is part of the cultural heritage of the community and should remain for future generations. What the DPWH fails to take into account is that we have few enough examples of vernacular architecture and what would disappear is unique to Bohol. The homeowners also feel that "Bohol's claim to be one of our country's most exemplary provinces for eco-cultural (preservation) will surely be diminished if part of its enviable legacy of ancestral homes will vanish into thin air." So why can't the plan be redesigned?

Next comes Dr. Benito Legarda who is upset with the tourism office of Mabalacat, Pampanga, putting up a statue to kamikaze pilots. If this weren't so pathetic, it would be funny—on par with Americans erecting a statue of Osama bin Laden on the site of the World Trade Center or the Jews honoring Adolph Hitler with a memorial in Jerusalem. The sad part is that the mayor can't see the ludicrousness of the situation or that it makes all of us the butt of jokes and a laughing stock, because who puts up statues to murderous foes? I mean have we lost all vestiges of sensibility and discernment as to what is proper? Don't get me wrong. I believe in forgiveness, but I don't believe in honoring enemies for their acts in war time. So please, could the people of Mabalacat kindly remove the eyesore? Thank you.

Then there's my favorite senator, a.k.a. Flash Gordon, who insists on installing a gold statue of Arnold Schwarzenegger, oops, Lapu-Lapu, in Rizal Park. Listen: I have nothing against the favorite son of Cebu (I may not agree with the artistic attributes of the piece, but there's that *"de gustibus"* stuff, and what can we do if so many people are tasteless) but there is also apparently a law that reserves the park for heroes of the 1996 Revolution. (Too bad the National Historical Institute won't sue). If the good senator wishes to put up statues to every single hero from here to kingdom come in Rizal Park, then will he please first amend the law? Because what he is really demonstrating is an utter disdain for the law of the land that we ordinary mortals have to put up with whether we agree or not, and all because being senator, he can get away with it and who's going to do anything about it? The fact, of course, that the new tourism secretary hails from Cebu makes it much harder since this is the type of stunt politicians like to pull in order to curry favor this time, I presume, with the Cebuanos. Perhaps Secretary Ace Durano who is so much younger can show some respect for the law and request for its removal since Rizal Park is under his department.

It's true the headlines crow about the 6 percent growth and the booming stock market and the appreciation of the peso, but the feeling persists that we're going to hell in a basket. With the examples our leaders set, can you blame us?

* * *

Comments to bambiharper@yahoo.com

Better than dreams

YOUNG BLOOD

Rey Carlo Sajulan

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

ALL I ever wanted was to fulfill my dreams.

You see, I've always been a dreamer, and an imaginative one at that from when I was small. When morphing time came, I'd be Billy, the Blue Ranger of the Power Rangers. With the powers and abilities of Professor Xavier, Captain Planet, Superman, Dennis of Ghostfighter, Kenshin, Chichiri, and Kurapika combined, I would fight the forces of evil. And I would be invincible!

When I grew older, I learned to accept that I didn't have such powers. So, I opted for more realistic dreams. With inputs from Salaguinto magazine and Discovery Channel, I decided to be a genetic engineer and be the first Filipino astronaut to go into outer space and land on Mars and turn it into a habitable planet just like the earth.

When I entered high school, my dreams became more down to earth. I wanted to be an environmentalist and work for World Wild Life Fund International or Greenpeace and purge the earth of pollution and protect endangered species like tigers and panda bears and live in a rainforest. My friends thought I was crazy. Maybe I was, for whoever heard of an environmentalist earning millions in this country? It's a rarely sought profession, but despite the lunacy of having such an ambition, I held on to it. You see, my family told me I could pursue whatever course I wanted in any university I chose. I had all the support I needed to get to where I wanted to go.

It only took a single incident to crush that dream. My father suffered a terrible stroke and he was forced to retire. The money he and my mother had saved soon evaporated into thin air.

Other problems came up, shaking the very foundations of our lives. The dreams of my youth faded away, and I felt like a little boy hiding in my little dark corner, feeding only on anger, disappointment and despair.

Now that I am in college, I've joined the thousands of men and women in white heading for the road that leads to greener pastures. And I haven't given up on dreaming.

I dream of more attainable things, like having my own personal computer (preferably a Pentium 4) to solve all my encoding and printing needs for my projects and articles. You see, a guy like me who loves to write (but who's gifted with a penmanship that is hardly legible) really is in dire need of one.

My father promised to buy me a PC when he gets his pension, but I am not betting on it.

Now and then, I have a prolonged fit of sadness and self-pity and just stare blankly into space. I write a lot and I don't even have a computer of my own.

Then there's the problem with the College Assurance Plan. Unless CAP settles its obligations with my school, I may not be allowed to take my final exams. If CAP goes bankrupt, my mother would go crazy trying to find the money to pay for my tuition.

She has just gotten out of the hospital, after her third confinement in the past four weeks. Being the breadwinner of our family and working as school administrator at the same time have sucked out much of her energy. She has to handle all our problems that cry out for immediate solutions, and sometimes tears just roll down her face as she struggles to deal with them all. I feel her agony and I feel so frustrated that I cannot contribute financially to our family's well-being.

So, with my parents needing all those medicines on top of our family's basic needs, I have to make do with a small allowance, a large chunk of which is for my daily fare. Our tight financial situation bothers me. If CAP's own problem remains unresolved, I may not even be able to continue my studies. And what is going to happen to my dreams?

All these worries and anxieties coupled with the demands of my course weighs me down. It feels as if the whole planet is on my back.

But late last year when I was feeling exhausted both physically and mentally, I opened the door and found a beautiful, charming girl greeting me with her toothless grin. I smiled in delight as my one-year-old niece took my hand and put it to her forehead. I picked her up and kissed her tenderly.

"Ta! Ta! Ta!" she exclaimed while pointing at the Kenshin Himura poster on the door. So, I brought her inside my bedroom and turned on the lights.

She examined every picture she saw—of anime characters, landscape paintings, my *barkada*, and religious icons. She pointed at her favorite picture: that of Mary carrying the Baby Jesus in her arms. She said, "Jssshh!" and drew it toward her face in imitation of a kiss.

Then it hit me. The King of Kings born in a manger inside a cave. There were no doctors, midwives, or nurses to assist at His delivery. He only had His Mother and stepfather, a donkey, and probably other animals to greet him. And a death threat issued by Herod hanging over His head.

I started to wonder how the families devastated by the three typhoons were going to celebrate Christmas. Many had lost their homes and some of them their loved ones. And here I was grumbling about how I couldn't have everything I wanted.

I looked at the picture and realize that I was not poor at all. I had a family that had gone through a lot of trials and remained united and strong. I had friends who took away the weariness and filled my days with laughter, and mentors who guided me through my darkest hours. I had become part of a Catholic Marian family, which changed my perspective and laid out a beautiful purpose for my life.

I took my little niece out of my room and put her down in front of the Christmas tree. I plugged on the lights and thye began dancing, as my niece's eyes sparkled in delight.

Fulfilled dreams are just icing and I already have the cake. Nothing, not even the latest computer on the market or any dream can take away what I have now: my family, friends, my mentors, my trials and my victories. In the end, what will matter is how warm and bright I've kept my relationship with God and with others. If I succeed in that, I know I'll be whole and at peace with myself.

I feel so rich and blessed. And I guess reality is better than dreams.

Rey Carlo Sajulan, 18, is a second year nursing student at Holy Name University in Tagbilaran City, Bohol. He is the literary editor of The Word, the official student publication of his school.

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Recall Maynilad's franchise

THE FREEDOM from Debt Coalition welcomes the release of Maynilad's $120-million performance bond to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS). We, however, criticize the MWSS for this belated move, as the government could have saved millions of pesos had the MWSS drawn on the performance bond immediately after the June 2004 Supreme Court decision.

Since March 2001, Maynilad has defaulted in paying concession fees to the MWSS at P2 billion annually. Its unpaid concession fees now amount to more than P10 billion. Thus, the US$120-million (roughly P6 billion) performance bond is not even enough to cover the whole amount of unpaid concession fees.

Maynilad's concession fees are used to finance old maturing loans of the MWSS. Due to Maynilad's failure to pay the concession fees, the MWSS was forced to incur more debts from bridge financiers to avoid the default in its old maturing loans. The belated action of the MWSS in drawing on the performance bond contributed, therefore, to the worsening condition of the government's fiscal health.

Our bitter experience with Maynilad should serve as a warning to the government: it should reject any agreement that will result in further exacerbation of the situation. This includes the present Maynilad rehabilitation plan proposed by the court-appointed receiver. To the mind of consumers and taxpayers, the purported rehabilitation is nothing more than a government bailout of a floundering private company by using public funds.

To add insult, it is a bailout cooked in the kitchens of Malacañang as payment for political debts incurred in the last elections.

Maynilad's rehabilitation-cum-bailout is a further testament that the private sector is not as efficient and cost-effective as proponents of water privatization claim to be.

Thus, the FDC calls on the government to stop coddling Maynilad. Instead of rehabilitation, the government should immediately terminate Maynilad's concession agreement.

—WILSON FORTALEZA,
vice president, Freedom from Debt
Coalition, 34 Matiyaga St.,
Central District, Quezon City

PAGBAYARIN!
-KMP-

HACIENDA Luisita workers commemorating the Jan. 21, 1987 Mendiola Massacre where it happened.

PDI PHOTO

GMA intervention urged in Hacienda Luisita row

THE WORSENING peace and order situation in the province of Tarlac is very alarming: a brutal dispersal of protestors in Hacienda Luisita in Nov. 16, 2004 left at least seven people dead; a local peasant leader was slain by gunmen wearing fatigue uniforms; and two picketers narrowly escaped death after they were shot at close range in their barricade inside the *hacienda*. These and the persistent story of several migrant farm workers—a father and his son, together with seven others—who are widely believed to have been also killed during the violent Nov. 16 incident.

And yet the Hacienda Luisita strike is only two months old. This labor problem, sitting right in the backyard of a former president, is nowhere near any peaceful resolution after the Cojuangco-Aquino clan closed its door to any talks with the striking workers. We expect a lengthy labor row and, possibly, more violence in the *hacienda*.

As Tarlaqueños, we are living witnesses to the sufferings of our people in this sprawling sugarcane plantation. We remember how the *hacienda* folks were transported to face the military tanks and fight for President Aquino during the 1986 Edsa uprising. We heard President Aquino's promise, during her presidential campaign, to redistribute the Luisita lands to its tillers; then saw how her administration eventually broke that promise. We have seen how the tens of thousands of our people inside the *hacienda* were deprived of decent life after they were allowed a measly pay slip of P9.50 worth of food for over a week.

It is saddening that since the killings and harassments inside the *hacienda* started, President Macapagal-Arroyo has yet to say something about the plight of our people in the *hacienda*, while the labor department, the police and the military are only too willing to play to the tune of Rep. Benigno Aquino Jr.

We appeal to President Arroyo, to Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, and to our lawmakers to please convince the Cojuangco-Aquino clan to sit down and talk with the protestors. With every violent incident and the escalating tension inside Hacienda Luisita, Tarlaqueños get more edgy about the security of the Luisita folks. Only through courteous dialogue—without the goons and the military—will this the labor row be settled and further violence averted.

—ERICSON S. DELA CRUZ,
president, Alpha Sigma Phi,
Tarlac Alpha chapter

Another political payback

THE APPOINTMENT of Alberto D. Lina as customs commissioner has underscored once again the politicking of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Personally, I do not know or have met Lina, a brother of former Interior Secretary Jose Lina, who actively campaigned for the election of Ms Arroyo. Nonetheless, Alberto's being the present chair of Airfreight 2000, which is a licensee of freight forwarder Federal Express, immediately raises a lot of eyebrows, to say the least. Lina's appointment is akin to expecting Winnie the Pooh to refrain from partaking her bowl of honey.

Of course, Ms Arroyo or her spokesperson, Secretary Ignacio Bunye, can always claim that Lina will sever his ties with his present employer and divest himself of any and all interests conflicting with his position as customs commissioner. If you believe that line, you must also believe in the tooth fairy.

—L.M. ERMITAÑO,
10/F Banco de Oro Bldg.,
Paseo de Roxas, Makati City

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First Gen not with YNN

THIS is in reference to Neal Cruz's column, titled "Questions on Masinloc power plant bidding." (PDI, 2/2/05)

First of all, we categorically state that we have no business or personal relationship with YNN, the winning bidder for the Masinloc assets.

Second, the argument that YNN and First Gen conspired so that they would emerge as the winning bidder defies logic:

1. Had we conspired, we would have made sure that YNN submitted a bid just higher than ours, not double ($561 million versus $275 million). The high bid of YNN, close to the cost of a brand-new plant, leaves so much money on the table for PSALM if it had indeed been a conspiracy.

2. Cruz argues that it could be a setup because YNN may simply decide to forfeit its $9-million bid guarantee; then it could transfer the Masinloc asset to First Gen at a much lower bid price. Such a conclusion fails to recognize an important element of the "Bid Rules." He completely misses the point that the First Gen bid of $275 million is way below the minimum bid requirement of $380 million. This minimum bid price was later announced only after the bids were all submitted. So by the "Bid Rules," it does not automatically fall into First Gen's lap! Thus, the conspiracy theory Cruz puts forward simply does not hold water.

Moreover, a number of factors affected our bid offer which are important to recognize. Let me just mention two.

1. The market—Meralco has announced that it would be reluctant to sig any new power purchase contracts. W certainly did not assume a Meralco deal i our bid. Also, it would be difficult to finance the Masinloc purchase at a high bi price even if Meralco was willing to sign contract. Meralco's credit ratings have deteriorated, and its financial outlook ha worsened again with the recent Court o Appeals decision. Without a Meralco contract and the difficulty of financing, we believe that our bid price was fully justified.

2. Additional investment—The technical analysis reveals that several million of dollars will have to be invested to brin the plant to reliable operating conditions This is significant as it will affect the overall economics. Again, this led us to our offer which, until today, we still consider responsible bid.

In closing, let me say that we initiall pursued our interest in the Masinloc plan with a consortium of five in mind. Thre potential partners dropped off principall because of the concerns raised above. W went ahead without the fourth potentia investor because of disagreements ove partnership roles.

For Masinloc to have fetched such high bid of $561 million overwhelms us and we wish the YNN consortium the bes of luck with their economics.

—PETER D. GARRUCHO JR., vice chai
and CEO, First Generation Holding
Corp., 4/F Benpres Bldg., Exchange Roa
cor. Meralco Avenue, Pasig City

Not behind 'bogus' raid

MAY we refer to the Jan. 29 INQUIRER story "Officer behind 'bogus' raid to get real medal" by Christian V. Esguerra. The same story also contains a cartoon sketch of an animal saying, *"Palitan ang pekeng medalya."*

Let me point out that I was never in any way, directly or indirectly, involved in the raid ascribed to me and my unit, the National Capital Region-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (NCR-CIDG). It was the CIDU unit of the CIDG, led by Capt. Jesus Cabigting, that undertook the raid. Please correct the notion that "the Philippine National Police leadership think that (I) deserve the Distinguished Conduct Medal from President Macapagal-Arroyo" (sic) because nothing of the sort will happen. I have not been selected by the PNP leadership to receive such honor. The only humble recognition that I will be receiving is a medal for bravery, and this is due to an entirely different accomplishment.

Kindly set right the grave misimpression that I had an "Oplan: Green Archer" which Esguerra described as a bogus CIDG report. I have nothing to do with it.

It saddens me, my family and my unit deeply that the leading and esteemed No. 1 news organization in the country, bravely sporting the slogan "Balanced News, Fearless Views," came out with a report, maligning reputations, without first getting int the heart of the truth. It is disheartening, t say the least, that it singled me and my uni out as the object of "much criticisms" by ou Muslim brothers and sisters.

—FEDERICO E. LACISTE
police senior superintenden
and chief
National Capital Region
Criminal Investigatio
and Detection Group
Camp Crame, Quezon City

MY original lead was quite straightforward, making use of Muslims' criticisms o the raid merely as a background.

But Senior Superintendent Laciste canno distance himself from the raid. No less than hi fellow CIDG officials advised this reporter an other media people to get the details about th raid straight from him. When he phoned m last Jan. 29 to complain about the article, h admitted that he and his men at the NCR CIDG were at the site, though only as a suppor unit. In fact, he made himself quite availabl for interview with reporters on site.

On Oplan: Green Archer, I never wrot that it was his report. My previous article on the controversial raids will attest to this

—CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA, PDI reporte

Robbed in a drug store

HAVE you ever been a victim of a highway robbery?

Well, if not, you don't have to wait for that incident to happen to you. All you have to do is go to a drugstore and buy some medicines.

If you're nursing a terrible toothache, chances are your dentist will prescribe to you an antibiotic which you must take for at least seven days to eliminate the infection—and the pain—after which a diagnosis will be made whether or not the aching tooth has to be extracted.

And since you will have to take the 250 or 500 mg antibiotic capsule three times a day for seven days that means you will have to buy 21 capsules to be able to comply with your dentist's prescription.

OK, you're still fine up to that point. But the moment you pay for the 21 capsules, which now cost you P1,008 at P48 each, that's the only time you will feel how it is to be robbed by the country's drug manufacturers.

For some Filipinos, P1,008 may b peanuts. But for us, it's a matter of life o death; I'm pretty sure millions of ou countrymen cannot afford it.

I just came from a drugstore to bu some antibiotics for me. And now I kno how it hurts to be robbed in broad daylight after I was told that the unbrande generic for the same medicine costs onl P8 per capsule.

I can't imagine how those so-calle branded drugs could cost that much whe another brand are almost five time cheaper.

Something must be wrong—somewhere. And to be blunt about it, what the Department of Trade and Industr Department of Health, Bureau of Foo and Drugs, and Philippine Internationa Trading Corporation doing to stop thi immoral, unwarranted escalation of dru prices?

—LOPE S. LUCIDO, Ph.D., North Fairview
Quezon City, philipevardone@yahoo.com

InqBox

Dear Readers, Text us your comments, suggestions and views on today's news or how it was delivered. Tell us about the news you are interested in and the things you want improved in your favorite newspaper. Text INQUIRER <section keyword> name/city/message and send to 283 (Smart) or 2207 (Globe). The section keywords are indicated in the logo of each section.

Is the government justified to raise the value-added tax (VAT) from 10 percent to 12 percent? Why or why not?

VAT kami na naman? dis is a Violating Act of Treachery (VAT)! a Very Abused Tactic (VAT) & a Villain Assault-Affliction To (VAT) the people. ano VA, Talaga yan? di na VA, Titigilan ang pasakit sa mamamayan? para silang VAcuum cleaner ng Tao (VAT)—sinisipsip.
—Elmer Guevara, *urdaneta city*

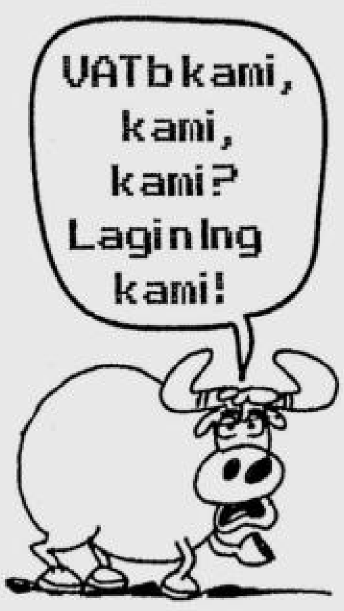
why raise the Vat when more dan 500 billion from tax revenues is lost to corruption. mgpapanting talaga tenga mo!
—T. Balderama, *QC*

no. if d govt spends d same effort in stopping corruption, as it is trying to raise d Vat, der won't be a need 2 raise d vat.
—Gerard Gumban, *davao city*

no, its too much! what will then happen 2 us Filipinos? poor are getting poorer, the rich are getting richer. Why?
—may g. malapitan, *quezon city*

No, becoz most of d items coverd by VAT are used by d middle & lower income groups. ONLY. Why not scrap d pork barrel?
—Ma.Chetoni L. Marpuri, *Balanga, Bataan*

In a way yes. We have 2 take d bitter pill 2 help our country from crisis.
—Ern Dancel, *Urdaneta City*



no, another p.i.a. 4 d people, Why not prosecute tax cheaters, greedy businessmen, lucio tan, d marcoses, danding, I'm sure ders enough.
—renato p., *mkti*

no, bcuz d govt. shud intensify more in tax collections rather than increasing d cOmmOdity cost 2 catch up with d deficit.
—luke eduard ensong, *bayawan city*

Hindi. kasi kung talagang umuunlad ang Pilipinas, bakit mga ordinaryong tao ang kailangan magsakripisyo sa dagdag na VAT?
—Ma. Katherine Napa, *Parañaque*

no, there are other sources d gov't can generate income from like solving d tax & custom leakages.
—lito o. ardivilla, *roxas city*

its not how much dey raise d Vat. what matters is d info dissemination bcoz a lot of people don't understand d consequences of d raise.
—glenda castro, *mandaluyong city*

message: Yes! GMA & her eco advisers can't reject IMF-WB imposition 2 make healthy daw RP eco bottomline. Ginagago tau!
—Art Garcia, *Ligao City*

It is good to people who corrupt the money collected from VAT, but unjust to people who will qualify to pay the burden. It is evidently because the Filipinos are in crisis due to curruption, hasn't the government sensed it?
—Brisneve Edullantes, *cebu*

Yes; the opposition need assume that BIR is as imperfect as the House, and bleeding pesos from the poor is no stolen gold mine.
—socrates acuna, *antipolo*

i think it is not justifiable bcoz i believe d government should not focus on raising d tax but rather focusing on EFFORTS to increase tax collection.
—keith briones, *quezon city*

yes & no, yes coz it helps solve d country's financial problem. NO, coz d lower class will bear d load.
—Alex, *puerto princesa*

hindi. di dagdag na buwis ang sagot sa problema kung d naman nakarating sa mga tao ang binabayad ni dagdag, at ilan lang ang nakikinabang.
—myla franco, *San Gabriel, bulacan*

No, as has been pointed out by people lyk maceda, there are many other ways 2 raise money 4 d government. NO! as has been said b4, d solution isn't new, or in dis case, increase in taxes but d proper collection of d current taxes.
—Gerard Gumban, *davao city*

News and Opinion

re. Luz Rimban – Logging Expos Threats. It's tough but we're with you in whatever way we could. This isn't just about logging, it's also about the deteriorating sense of values of Pinoys.
—rene locsin, *QC*

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Clash signals all-out war vs Reds

By **Julie S. Alipala**, *PDI Mindanao Bureau*, and **Alcuin Papa** *in Manila*

COMMUNIST rebels rejected yesterday a condition that they cease fire for peace talks to resume as a top military officer in Mindanao ordered a full-scale assault against the guerrillas.

Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza, Southern Command chief, said at least 16 of more than 100 guerrillas were killed in a clash with soldiers of the 36th Infantry Battallion in Compostela Valley.

Braganza said two MG-520 helicopters were sent from Zamboanga City to the area to "neutralize these rebels."

In a statement issued by the Communist Party of the Philippines posted on their website, the CPP said that by setting the condition for the resumption of the talks, the Arroyo administration is violating The Hague Joint Declaration signed by the two sides in 1992.

"If the Arroyo regime persists in pushing for a ceasefire as a precondition, it might as well call for an end to formal peace negotiations and demonstrate to the entire world that it is no longer interested in tackling and addressing the roots of the civil war in the Philippines," the statement said.

"On the other hand, the CPP and the NDF [National Democratic Front] will continue to assert that peace negotiations be conducted along the framework of The Hague Joint Declaration, whether with the Arroyo regime or the regime that succeeds it," it said.

The Hague Joint Declaration sets the framework and agenda of the peace negotiations.

The CPP said that by signing the agreement, "the (government) has bound itself to discuss the matter of a ceasefire and the disposition of the armed forces of both parties only after having negotiated and settled the outstanding socioeconomic and political issues that are at the core of the present armed conflict."

"By setting a ceasefire as a precondition for peace negotiations, the Arroyo regime is demonstrating its contempt for The Hague Joint Declaration," the CPP said.

The communists said they continue to reject the Philippine Constitution and its use as a framework for the talks.

Peace talks hit a snag in August 2004 when the NDF withdrew from the negotiating table over the United States reclassification of the CPP-NPA-NDF as a terrorist organization.

The NDF accused the government of not exerting enough effort in having the terror tag removed. Government officials, however, said the removal of the tag rests solely on the actions of the communist movement.

The tough talk came as two Army platoons encountered about 100 New People's Army rebels in Compostela, triggering more than two hours of fighting, military spokesperson Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual said.

Pascual said the military could not retrieve the slain rebels but based its toll on civilians' accounts.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye called on the rebels to "discard the option of armed revolution," saying "a ceasefire is feasible and will bring the peace talks to a principled conclusion."

Government troops came under fire from another front in Mindanao as the terrorist group Abu Sayyaf attacked an Army detachment in Indanan, Sulu.

Maj. Bartolome Bacarro, spokesperson of the Philippine Army, told reporters that some 60 members of the Abu Sayyaf stormed the command post of the Army's 53rd Infantry Battalion. *With reports from Inquirer wires*

Hundreds of Misuari followers kill 12 soldiers in Jolo gun battles

HUNDREDS of followers of jailed former Moro rebel leader Nur Misuari attacked government troops and occupied an Army detachment on Jolo island, sparking clashes that killed 12 soldiers and wounded 15 others, the military said.

The attacks on Monday night by about 500 followers of Misuari in Panamao and two other nearby towns were apparently touched off by a disagreement over recent military offensives against the Abu Sayyaf group that affected his strongholds, Army Brig. Gen. Agustin Demaala said.

Most of the military casualties occurred in Patikul, where gunmen opened fire on Army reinforcements, killing 11 Marines and wounding 13 others, a military officer said.

A child was reportedly killed in the crossfire.

The gun battles continued up to yesterday afternoon.

Fighting seemed to be centered in Panamao's Siit village, where up to 300 gunmen attacked and occupied an Army detachment near a civilian hospital, Demaala said.

'We're not after MNLF'

Demaala urged the attackers to withdraw to avoid full-scale fighting.

"We're not running after them," Demaala told The Associated Press.

"They should withdraw so there would be no escalation of this fighting and we would not have to use bombs and stronger weaponry."

Demaala said he would ask local civilian officials to intervene.

"We are trying to contain the situation. Our priority is the safety of the civilians and to secure vital government installations in the area," said Marine commander Maj. Gen. Orlando Buenaventura.

Clinics, bridges attacked

Security sources said the raiders targeted bridges, roads and clinics.

Gov. Ben Loong was flying from Manila to his province to help negotiate a halt to the fighting.

While a clash was underway in Panamao, about 80 gunmen attacked Army troops involved in a civic project in Parang, killing a soldier and wounding two others.

Several attackers were wounded.

The gunmen apparently wanted to retaliate after Army troops attacked their strongholds near Panamao, where Abu Sayyaf bandits sought refuge last week.

Misuari, held on rebellion charges in a police camp near Manila, headed the Moro National Liberation Front which signed a peace deal with the government in 1996. He was later elected governor of a five-province autonomous region.

In November 2001, his followers attacked an Army camp on Jolo. More than 100 people were killed.

Misuari's followers have been accused by military officials of supporting the Abu Sayyaf. *AP, AFP*

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Village execs say they didn't approve mining

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—Village officials on Sunday denied having declared that tribal folk in a remote village in upland Kasibu town, some 70 kilometers from here, have approved a large-scale mining project to be conducted there.

Antonio Dingcog, village chief of Barangay Didipio, expressed concern that minutes of a supposed barangay assembly, which was organized by pro-mining villagers last year, was now being used as proof that the project had been accepted by most villagers. Didipio is the site of the proposed gold-copper project being pushed by Climax-Arimco Mining Corp. (CAMC), an Australian firm.

The project, which is expected to yield about four million ounces of gold and 1.5 billion ounces of copper deposits, covers some 21,000 hectares near the Nueva Vizcaya-Quirino border.

According to the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, the social acceptability of any mining project must first be obtained before actual operations would be allowed.

In pursuing its application, officials of CAMC and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau claimed that Didipio residents had given their approval of the mining project during a barangay assembly meeting on Oct. 16 last year.

Dingcog, however, denied this, saying that the barangay assembly, attended by pro-mining villagers, was conducted without his knowledge or that of a majority of the barangay council.

A group of Didipio residents has been opposing the mining project due to the supposed environmental destruction it would bring to their village.

According to the minutes of the Oct. 16 meeting, only three of the 10 officials were present during the assembly. Council member Henry Guay, who presided over the meeting, cited a circular from the Department of Interior and Local Government that assemblies must be conducted on that day in all barangays nationwide. *Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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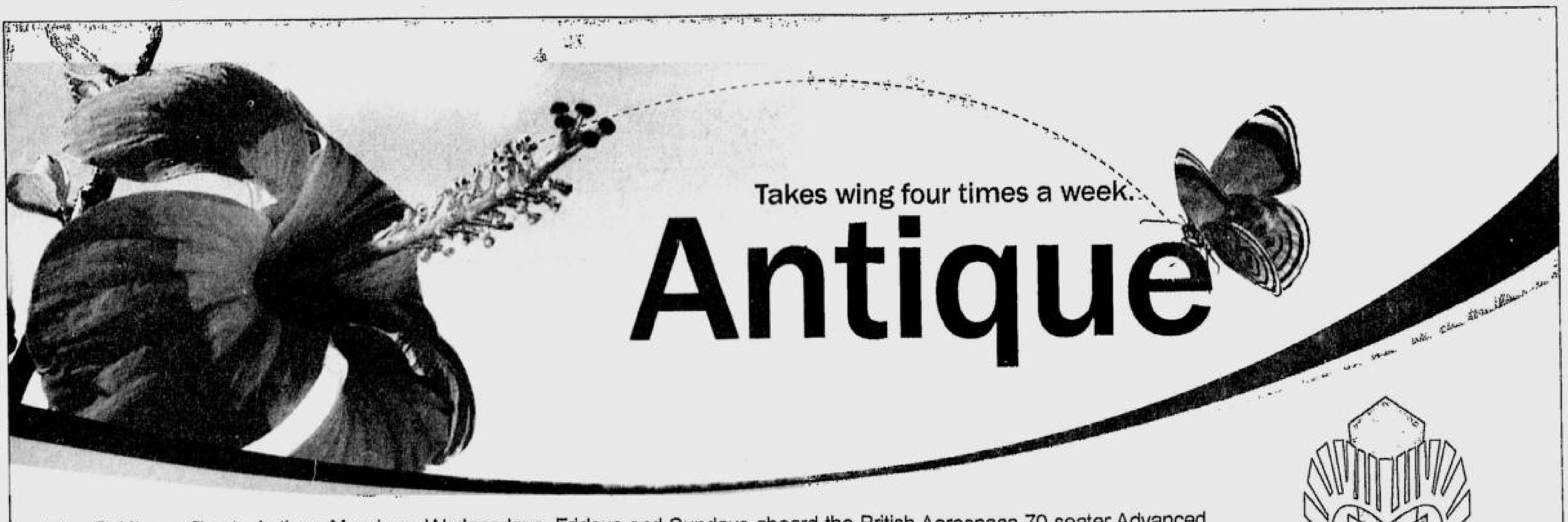
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Townsfolk protest closure of exit road

GUIGUINTO, Bulacan—Officials, residents and businessmen here started on Saturday night a three-day vigil to protest the closure of the Barangay Tabe temporary exit along the North Luzon Expressway.

The group, led by Mayor Ambrocio Cruz, displayed coffins and placards and lighted candles near the route to symbolize the death of the town's progress due to the exit's closure.

Cruz said the closure would mean monthly losses worth at least P300 million for the town because businesses in the industrial area may either scale down production or pull out due to the town's inaccessibility. He said the closure would also punish motorists because it is the most convenient route to the town.

The Toll Regulatory Board (TRB), through the Philippine National Construction Corp., on Friday distributed leaflets announcing the closure of the Guiguinto and Balagtas exits starting Feb. 5.

Several exits along the rehabilitated NLEx, including Guiguinto and Balagtas, will be removed under a new system that will be implemented on the expressway.

Cruz said the closure order insulted the municipal government because local officials were not notified of the move. He said he learned of the closure after some residents showed him copies of the notice.

In December last year, Guiguinto residents and officials also protested an original closure order, prompting the TRB to extend the opening of the Tabe exit until this month.

Bulacan Gov. Josefina de la Cruz in December approved a resolution refusing the closure not only of the Tabe but also of the Meycauayan and Balagtas exits. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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•BAYAN BUL
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RESIDENTS of Guiguinto, Bulacan bring out their protest against the closure of an exit toll gate leading to their town on the North Luzon Expressway. MITCH MAURICIO

Suspect in slay of witness in Damalerio killing charged

PAGADIAN CITY—A murder case has been filed against the suspect in the killing of Edgar Amoro, one of the witnesses in the May 2002 murder of journalist Edgar Damalerio.

Senior Supt. Karib Muammil, police chief of Zamboanga del Sur, told the INQUIRER that charges were filed against Mohammad Abubakar Maulana before the city state prosecution office here late last week.

Muammil said Maulana was identified by three witnesses as one of the three suspects who shot Amoro as he stepped out of the main entrance of the Zamboanga del Sur National High School on Feb. 2.

The three witnesses are civilian volunteers of the barangay government of Sta. Maria district. They identified the suspect through the police's rogue gallery.

Maulana, declared by police as the city's public enemy No. 1, was captured last year in Iligan City for robbery.

The suspect, who is still in his early 20s, was implicated in a string of robberies, extortion and car theft cases, and in the killing of several policemen in the city.

He was also implicated in the grenade attack on the parking lot of D' Beam Citimart last year that left seven people hurt. Maulana and Abraham Latip were charged with extortion and multiple frustrated homicide.

He posted bail and was placed under the custody of a local politician in Dinas, Zamboanga del Sur, his hometown.

Amoro was set to testify in court this month in the Damalerio murder case. Amoro and another witness, Edgar Ongue, tagged PO1 Guillermo Wapille, a former city police intelligence agent, as the gunman in the Damalerio killing.

Wapille is currently detained at the city reformatory center. *Hernan P. dela Cruz, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Cops raise alarm over arming of fishermen

NAGA CITY—Police have expressed alarm over the arming of commercial fishermen, saying weapons have frustrated attempts by authorities to put a stop to illegal fishing.

Senior Supt. Romeo Mapalo, Camarines Sur police chief, said policemen sent to arrest fishermen for trespassing the 15-km municipal fishing grounds feel intimidated by the weapons that the fishermen carry.

Mapalo recalled the same experience he had while he was assigned in Masbate.

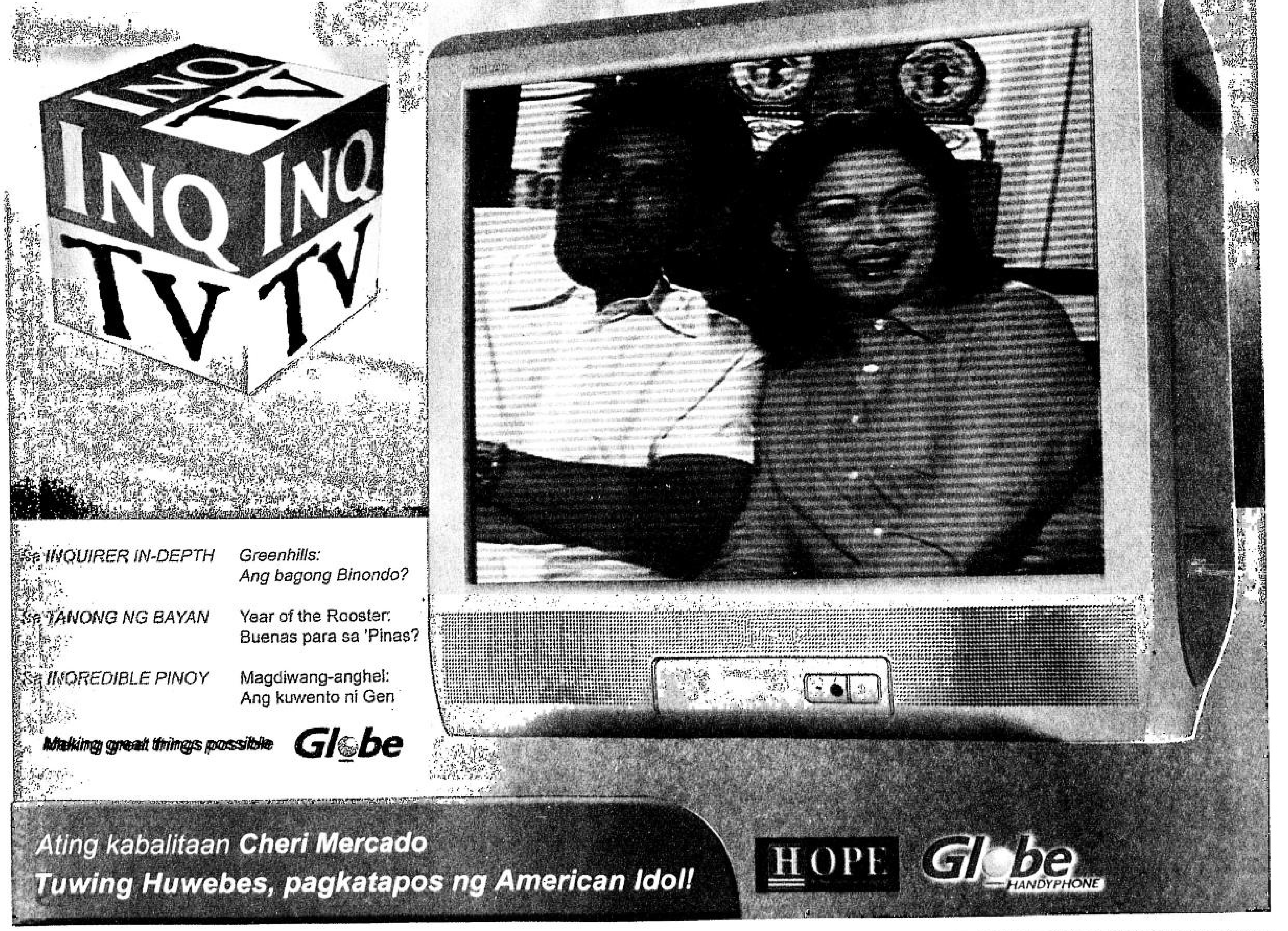
He said during his tenure in Masbate, policemen in outrigger boats would be forced to retreat upon learning that the commercial fishermen they were running after were fully armed.

He said the armed fishermen sometimes even pursue policemen using their big fishing vessels.

Mapalo said he suspects that influential people owned the commercial fishing vessels that come from the Visayas and encroach in municipal fishing grounds around the island province of Masbate.

Fishing vessels weighing more than 3 gross tons are not allowed in these areas.

He said police authorities only participate in anti-illegal fishing operations when requested by local government units. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



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Sa INQUIRER IN-DEPTH Greenhills: Ang bagong Binondo?
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Hike in LGUs’ revenue seen in VAT increase

BACOOR, Cavite—As debates on the controversial value-added tax (VAT) continued, Senate President Franklin Drilon on Saturday claimed that the two-percent increase in the proposed VAT “would surely benefit the local government units” as any increase in tax revenues of the national government would translate to an increase in their internal revenue allotment (Ira).

Drilon, who was here to lead the oathtaking of Bacoor Vice Mayor Edwin Malvar and 1,000 residents and barangay officials who joined the Liberal Party en masse, said he believed that the Senate would soon be able to come up with a “more palatable” version of the VAT—one that would get the nod of militant groups and business communities.

He said the public should understand that potential additional tax revenues from the increase in VAT would help fund the projects of LGU officials.

“Any increase in the government’s tax collection will definitely help augment the Ira of the LGUs. Thus, the increase in VAT will ultimately help our LGUs in raising their fund allocations,” Drilon told the INQUIRER.

He said they were now working overtime to come up with a VAT bill that would safeguard the interests of poor Filipinos but at the same time help business groups.

Drilon said a revitalized Ira would likewise contribute to the government’s program to empower local officials and decentralize the functions of national government agencies.

“If your local governments have the funds to build school buildings, then you don’t have to go to my office or to any other senators and congressmen to finance your requests,” he said.

Drilon likewise slammed the “warning” of oil companies of an impending oil price increase if their VAT exemptions were lifted.

He said oil companies should not pass the burden of the additional taxes to their consumers.

“I think (Sen. Joker Arroyo) is right when he said that (their warning for oil price increases) is a blackmail. Oil companies are holding us hostage when they make statements like that,” he said.

In another venue, however, another senator said the increase in VAT was likely to make it more difficult for the military to purchase new equipment and supplies.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, a former Marine general, said the military’s fiscal problem was not the reason the Senate has proceeded to study a House measure expanding the VAT system.

He said the Senate has agreed to review the impact of the existing VAT system before it can evaluate an extended VAT bill because of evidence that the government failed to plug tax leaks.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines, which used to receive substantial shares from the national purse, will now compete for allocations in the Senate version of the 2005 General Appropriations Act, said Biazon. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau with a report from Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

PRECIOUS CARGO
A Navy man mounts his machine gun on a railing above a cargo of illegal lumber confiscated recently at the Mandaue City port. The cargo of lumber, authorities said, was shipped from Mindanao and was intercepted in waters off Cebu.
TONEE DESPOJO/CDN

Slain Kalinga writer’s kin in search of lawyer

BAGUIO CITY—The family of the slain Kalinga writer Stephen Omaois is looking for a lawyer to pursue its quest for justice for the murdered journalist.

Vicky Omaois, mother of Stephen, said a lawyer had told the family that the relatives of the six suspects wanted to settle the case before it reached the court.

But the mother of Stephen said she wanted to pursue the case and not settle for financial payment, according to Kalinga journalist Estanislao Albano.

Six men, including two minors, are now detained in the Tabuk jail for killing the 24-year-old Omaois. One of the suspects told the police that they had alcoholic drinks in Tabuk on Nov. 26 last year and decided to kill the first person they would see, who happened to be Omaois.

Omaois was stabbed with barbeque sticks. His head was bashed with a rock and his body was dumped near an elementary school, police said.

Two suspects were arrested while four others were surrendered by their relatives.

Omaois was a writer for the Tabuk-based Guru Press and a provincial correspondent of the Baguio-based weekly Northern Philippine Times.

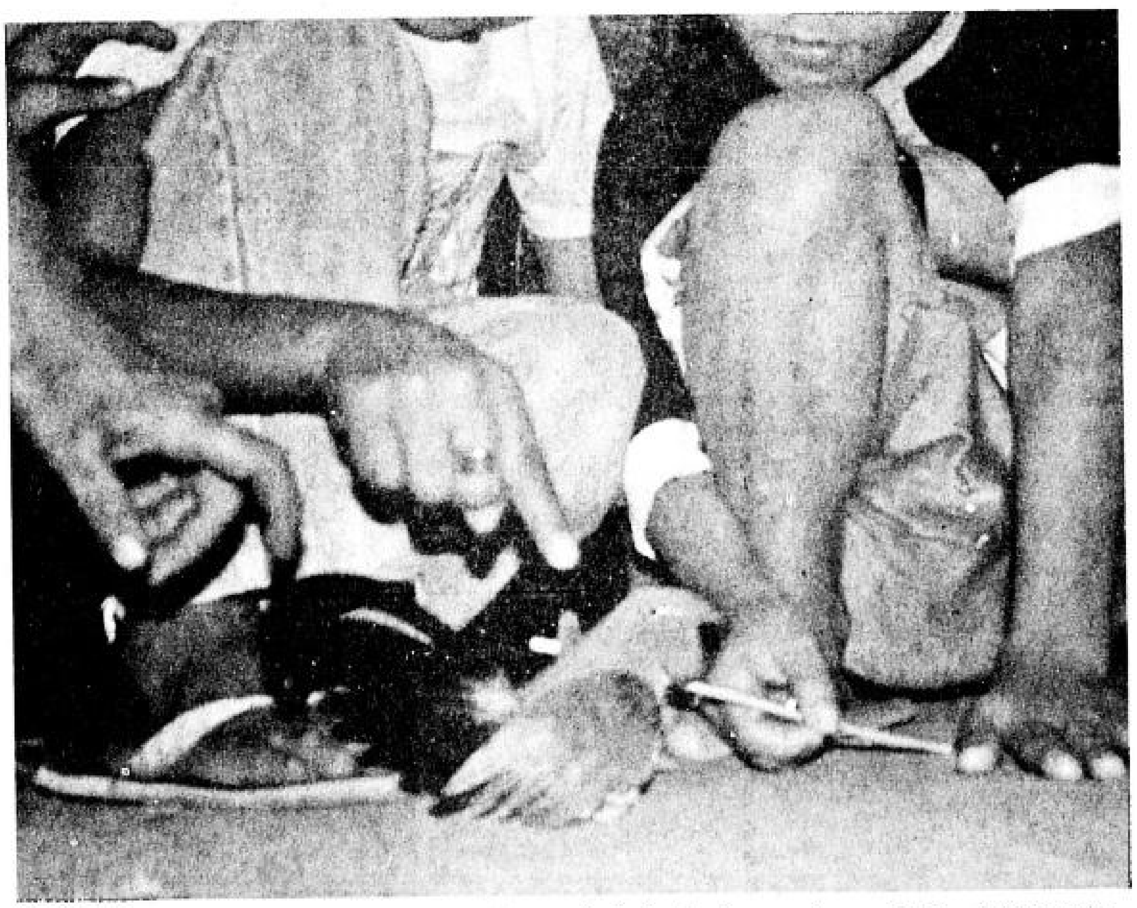
Albano said leaders of the Bago tribe, where Omaois was a member in Kalinga, had condemned moves of some of the relatives of the suspects to settle the case.

Francisco Gabel, chair of the League of Integrated Bago Young Adults, said settlement does not bode well with the province’s quest for peace, particularly inter-tribal conflicts.

The killing of Omaois, although not related to his work as a writer and journalist, was counted as among those that made the Philippines a very dangerous place for journalists to work in.

An international group of journalists had criticized the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo for doing too little to prevent the killings of media men in the country. *Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Baguio looks at new lunar year without meningo scare



YOUNGSTERS play with a toy rooster, one of the symbols that has become famous in Baguio City as the Lunar New Year approaches and ushers in the Year of the Rooster.
TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

BAGUIO CITY—The Year of the Rooster means much more to the local Chinese-Filipino community than a simple reversal of Baguio’s meningococcemia stigma.

Chinese-Filipino businessmen are raising funds to erect a monument to the workers of the historic Kennon Road, which was built in 1903.

The project will highlight the Spring Festival parade on Feb. 11, where businessmen plan to distribute to the crowd hundreds of Vitamin C tablets along with the assorted candies and biscuits that have become traditional treats during the annual Chinese New Year festivities.

The vitamin tablets are being supplemented to assure visitors that Baguio residents will “take care of them,” said Dr. Charles Cheng, a Chinese-Filipino civic leader here.

But he stressed that the meningococcemia scare had no basis because the disease that struck the summer capital between March 2004 and January did not bear the usual meningococcemia patterns.

“People should not be afraid because if this was really meningococcemia, thousands and thousands of Baguio residents would fall like flies,” he said during the festival launch here on Tuesday.

“So instead of belaboring the disease, we are concentrating on Baguio’s heritage, which is why we are cooperating to build a shrine to the Kennon Road workers,” Peter Ng, parade chair and owner of Hotel Supreme here, said.

The American colonial government hired thousands of migrant workers from 42 countries to help build the tourist-friendly zigzag road in 1903, according to Erlyn Ruth Alcantara, one of the authors of the book “Japanese Pioneers in Northern Luzon.”

The Japanese descendants of workers have erected their own monument in 2003, but the Chinese community wants one that is devoted to their ancestors and all international workers, said Ng.

He said Baguio’s Chinese-Filipino community will still need to trace the descendants of the Chinese workers of Kennon Road.

Alcantara said the Chinese’ contractors, who could not take the physical demands of the construction work, remained as either traders or cooks here.

Cheng said the Chinese helped develop Benguet’s vegetable industry during the same period.

Baguio Mayor Braulio Yaranon and Tuba Mayor Jose Baluda are still searching for a permanent location for the Chinese monument.

The Benguet provincial board also passed a resolution endorsing the Kennon Road’s inscription as a World Heritage site, at the behest of the Baguio Regreening Movement. *Reports from Vincent Cabreza, Desiree Caluza and Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Iloilo hosts grand Lunar New Year fest

By Hazel P. Villa
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—As the only place in the country, next to Manila’s Binondo District, to publicly celebrate Chinese New Year in a grand style, the Filipino-Chinese community here vows to give “the most elaborate and festive celebration in the country” today at the heart of downtown Iloilo City.

Traffic on JM Basa, Mapa, Aldeguer and Iznart Streets will be rerouted to accommodate a grand parade for the New Year at 4 p.m., a cultural program at 5 p.m. and all-night dining and partying at the “Chinese Night Market” set-up in Plazoleta Gay, the heart of the celebrations.

“This year’s Chinese New Year celebrations will be bigger and better. Outside Metro Manila, Iloilo City is the only place that celebrates (the Lunar New Year) in a grand scale,” said Felipe A. Uygongco, president of the Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce Iloilo (FCCCI), one of the organizers of the event.

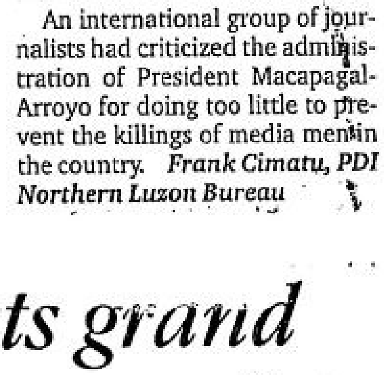
The FCCCI teamed up with the Federation of Chinese-Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Panay Inc., headed by Henry O. Chusuey, and the various schools and family associations to coordinate the third year of the event under the banner of the Iloilo Chinese-Filipino Cultural Foundation Inc. and the Iloilo City government.

Uygongco said one of the highlights of this year’s celebrations is the 20-minute fireworks display at 7 p.m., “the first of its kind in Iloilo City” costing P200,000, courtesy of SM City Iloilo, whose owner, Henry Sy, is of Chinese descent.

Ilonggos and other visitors will also be treated to 11 Chinese cultural presentations from the city’s five participating Filipino-Chinese schools, the Chinese-Filipino Dance Troupe and the Iloilo Youth Chapter of Buddha’s Light International Association.

Other events after the program include a concert, a Wushu-Sansho Tournament organized by the Iloilo Tinagan Martial Arts Club and a midnight Mass at the Fu Kung Yuan Temple in Fuentes-Delgado Streets to welcome the Year of the Rooster.

Organizers gave a conservative estimate of P800,000 to P1 million in expenses just for the program, fireworks and stage decorations alone.



A WOMAN vendor displays a pack of *tikoy* that has become synonymous with the celebration of the Lunar New Year.
JESS YUSON

Lawyers’ group plans to put forward resolution on fiscal crisis

BAGUIO CITY—The country’s lawyers plan to lick this summer the country’s fiscal crisis, and they are not talking here of the lack of fiscals or government prosecutors.

Lawyer Jose Anselmo Cadiz, national president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, said their group plans to pass a resolution to help resolve the financial crisis during the 10th national congress of lawyers at the CAP-John Hay Convention Center here in April.

Cadiz said the congress would help the financial crisis of the city because it would be the first big conference to decide to hold a convention here despite the meningococcemia scare that hit Baguio last month.

The congress, which is expected to attract 2,500 lawyers, is held every three years.

“This would be the first time that the convention will be held in Baguio,” Cadiz said. “We have been holding it either in Cebu and Davao. We hope to include Baguio in the rotation,” he said.

Among the issues expected to be tackled during the convention would be the expected revocation of the VAT exemption for lawyers, constitutional amendments and a Supreme Court ruling allowing 100 percent foreign ownership of mining firms operating in the country.

Convention coordinator Llewelyn Llanillo said their featured moot court presentation during the convention would be on measures against violence on women.

He said this would be the first time they would tackle gender violence. “It was not yet tested and the lady lawyers say that this is an issue closest to their heart,” he said.

The moot court will be presided over by newly-installed presiding justice of the Court of Appeals, Romeo Brawner, a native of Kiangan, Ifugao. Keynote speaker is Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.

IBP Governor Angelica Santiago said choosing gender violence as the featured topic was also related to their conference theme.

“It is somehow related to poverty alleviation because gender violence occurs because of poor economic balance. Some women were forced to submit to violence because of economic reasons,” she said. *Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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'Hacker' says he meant no harm in entry into websites

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—An alleged Filipino hacker of government websites denied that he went into hiding after a warrant was issued for his arrest.

"I am not hiding nor am I avoiding the charge against me," said JJ Maria Giner in an interview with the INQUIRER yesterday.

Giner, 28, said he was ready to face the accusation against him. "My family and I are deeply saddened by the reports that picture me as a fugitive from justice," he said.

Police earlier launched a manhunt for Giner, a resident of Jaro District here, after the Manila Regional Trial Court ordered his arrest on Jan. 4, for violating the Electronic Commerce Act of 2000.

Giner was reportedly the first person to be charged with the offense since the law passed.

But Giner's lawyer, Rodolfo Viajar Jr., said his client had already posted a P25,000 bail at the Regional Trial Court Branch 37 in Iloilo City on Jan. 27.

"Let us leave it to our justice system to determine whether or not I am guilty of the accusations against me," said Giner.

In a seven-page resolution, the Department of Justice charged Giner with penetrating the government website www.gov.ph, the National Economic and Development Authority, the National Book Development Board, the Philippine Navy, Dagupan City, and the web servers or computer systems hosting websites of the local Internet service provider Bitstop and University of the Philippines in the Visayas (UPV) in Miag-ao in Iloilo.

He allegedly also launched attacks against the websites of the Office of the Presidential Management Staff in Malacañang, the Task Force on Security of Critical Infrastructure, the Professional Regulatory Board, the Department of Labor and Employment, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, and the Journal Group of Companies.

In his counter-affidavit, Giner said he accessed the sites to "find out whether adequate security measures have been adopted by certain government and private agencies..."

But he said he had "no intention of corrupting, altering, stealing, or destroying" the sites.

"If I had the intention of destroying or corrupting the system, I would not have informed them."

SITE IS MILF BAILIWICK

US execs scout area for new war games

MAGUINDANAO—Representatives from the US Armed Forces and the US Embassy visited the Army's 6th Infantry Division headquarters here to assess the camp's capability to host American troops for war games.

"Late last week, they just dropped by, surveyed and conducted ocular inspection," said Lt. Col. Franklin del Prado, 6th ID spokesperson.

The team included James Fules, Joe Troutman and Frank Prestwood of the Joint United States Military Assistance Group (Jusmag).

Del Prado said the US troops inspected various buildings and structures that could house training facilities.

The 6th ID Camp Siongco Kampilan Division is based in Barangay Awang, just beside the Cotabato Airport.

But Del Prado said there was still no schedule for the war games.

He said the vast 6th ID camp is capable of housing US forces in the event joint RP-US military exercises are held here.

In June last year, a team of about 20 US soldiers conducted close-quarter battle training and marksmanship exercises with military forces assigned to the South-Central Mindanao regions.

The two-week, small-scale joint military exercises were held at the Army's 602nd Infantry Brigade headquarters in Carmen, North Cotabato.

North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol and Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan had expressed willingness to host RP-US war games in their areas provided they would not disrupt the ongoing peace process and villagers' lives.

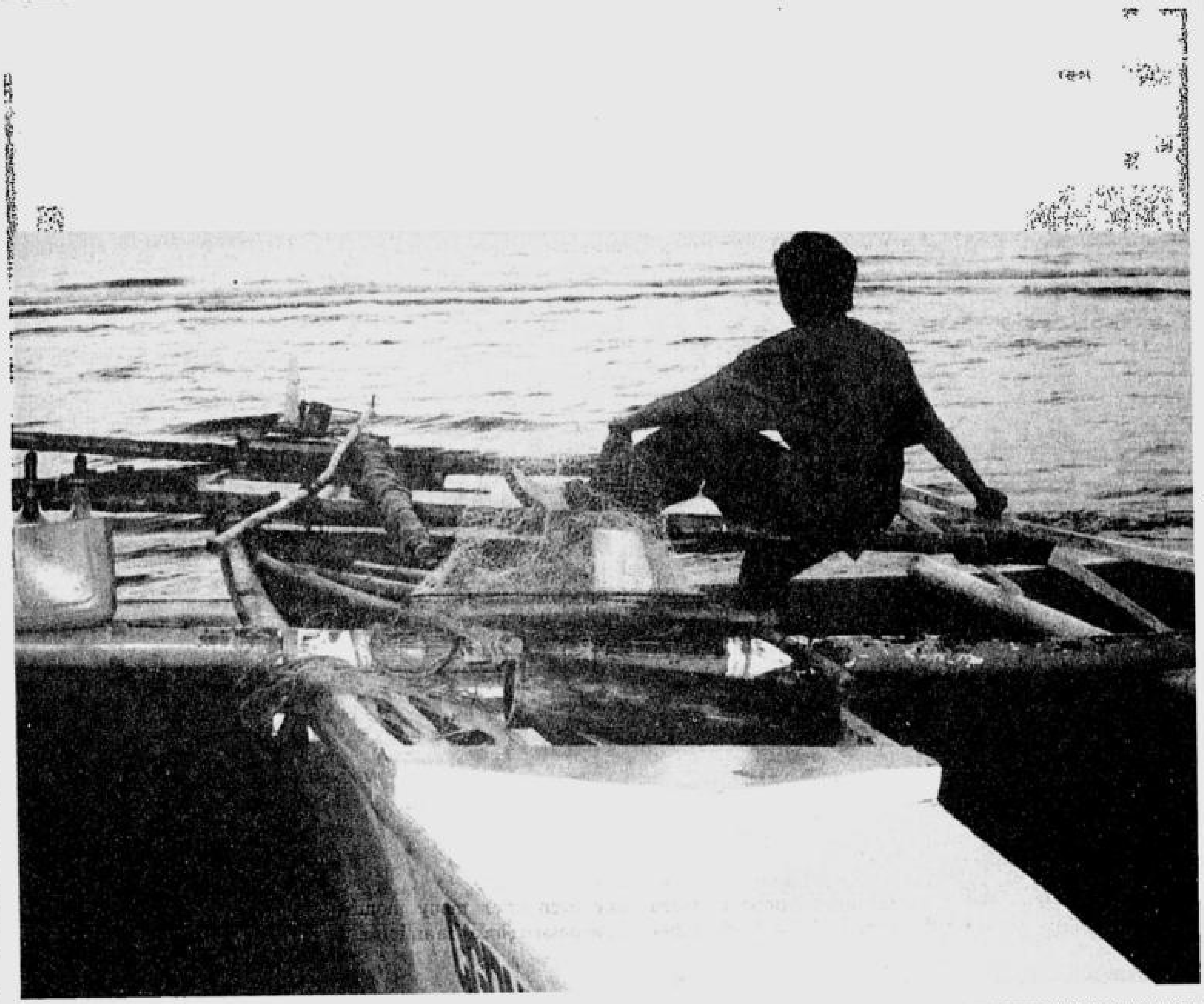
War games held last year were opposed by Left groups which claimed the exercises led to clashes and displaced civilians.

Maguindanao is a bailiwick of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

The MILF, which is talking peace with the Arroyo administration, expressed no opposition to the holding of RP-US military exercises "provided it will not affect the ongoing peace process," according to MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu.

In Pagadian City, American physicians and their local counterparts will hold a medical mission in two far-flung barangays on Friday.

Brig. Gen. Eugenio Cedo, deputy chief of the Army's First Infantry Division, said the medical mission is a social component of military exercises. *Edwin O. Fernandez and Hernan P. dela Cruz, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



LEONCIO BALBIN JR./PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

END OF DAY
A fisherman views the sunset at Darapidap Beach in Candon, Ilocos Sur after a day's work in the sea.

Body of Pinay slain by Jap husband bore torture marks

BACOLOD CITY—She left her family in Talisay City, Negros Occidental six years ago to work as an entertainer in Japan to have a better life.

But on Sunday, Rona Jimenez came home in a box, 18 days after her Japanese husband killed her in a fit of jealousy on Jan. 19.

Her grandmother, Lourdes Jimenez, wept upon seeing the box containing Rona's body at the Bacolod airport.

"I love Rona very much. When she was here, she used to sleep with me. She said she would come home for a vacation in December but now it is only her corpse that has arrived," said Lourdes, who raised Rona after her parents separated.

Her remains now lie at their home in Barangay Efigenio Lizares, Talisay City, for a week after which she would be buried, she added.

Rolly Jimenez fetched Rona's remains in Manila and brought her home on board a Philippine Airlines flight.

He told the INQUIRER that he almost fainted when he saw his daughter. "Her body has a lot of bruises and her neck, hand and feet appear broken. Her ear also looks like it had been bashed in," he said.

But, he added, there was nothing he could do if they could not attain justice for Rona's killing because they were poor.

Rona was allegedly strangled by Tatsuya Itabashi in their home at Soka City, Japan on Jan. 19, in a fit of jealousy. He then put her body in the trunk of his car and went to work to report to his boss what happened. He is now in police custody.

Rona's 3-year-old child from her former boyfriend appeared to also have bruises after the incident, reports from Japan said.

Lourdes said the girl was now in the custody of her father. *Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Gloria switches on power to Pangasinan village

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

SUAL, Pangasinan—For years, residents of the island-village of Cabalitian, a 10-minute boat ride from the Sual power plant in Pangasinan's mainland, could only stare at the bright lights of the plant.

But electric power finally came with the provision of two 34-kilovolt ampere generators by Mirant Philippines, owner of the 2,000-megawatt power plant that has been providing electricity to the Luzon grid since 1999.

President Macapagal-Arroyo on Friday switched on the power lines in Cabalitian (pop: 1,500), marking the 100-percent electrification of Pangasinan's villages.

The President was assisted by resigned Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. and Marce Fuller, corporate executive officer of Mirant Philippines, during the switch-on ceremony.

Ms Arroyo went to the house of couple Pedro and Andrea Jimenez and personally switched on the family's power. She later distributed certificates of energization to families in the village.

Gov. Victor Agbayani said the island's energization would harness its potential as one of the tourist destinations in the province.

The availability of electricity is expected to boost local tourism by ensuring a reliable power supply to local resorts and by encouraging economic development in the island-village, Agbayani said.

Some German visitors were seen on the island during the presidential visit.

This was not actually the first time that Cabalitian residents had a taste of electricity. Mirant has provided two generators to the island but these broke down last year because of overload.

Resident Adela Caamped, 55, said the old generators provided electricity only from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

She said their power bills depended on how many light bulbs and appliances each family owned. Caamped said for each light bulb, a family paid P15 while those who owned TV sets paid P50 a week.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, February 8, 2005
5th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading:	Gen 1:20-2:4
Gospel:	Mark 7:1-13

One day the Pharisees gathered around Jesus and with them were some teachers of the Law who had just come from Jerusalem.

They noticed that some of his disciples were eating their meal with unclean hands, that is, without washing them. Now the Pharisees, and in fact, all the Jews, never eat without washing their hands for they follow the tradition received from their ancestors. Nor do they eat anything when they come from the market without first washing themselves. And there are many other traditions they observe, for example, the ritual washing of cups, pots and plates.

So the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law asked him, "Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders, but eat with unclean hands?"

Jesus answered, "You, shallow people! How well Isaiah prophesied of you when he wrote: This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. The worship they offer me is worthless, for what they teach are only human rules. You even put aside the commandment of God to hold fast to human tradition."

And Jesus commented, "You have a fine way of disregarding the commandment of God in order to implant your own tradition. For example, Moses said: Do your duty to your father and your mother, and: Whoever curses his father or his mother is to be put to death. But according to you someone could say to his father or mother: 'I already declared Corban, which means "offered to God," what you could have expected from me.' In this case, you no longer let him do anything for a father or mother. So you nullify the word of God through the tradition you have handed on. And you do many other things like that."

Commentary

Jesus is engaged by the Pharisees on traditional points of practice—not the core elements of the law of Moses that sought to bind the people together in justice so that others would see the presence of The Holy One among them in their lives. Jesus condemns them (and us) "You even put aside the commandment of God to hold fast to human traditions." He uses the example of 'corban'—belonging to God, or the institutional structures of religion to excuse the commandment of caring for one's parents and family members—an insult to God's word of truth and justice. And 'we do many other things like that.' Things sadly haven't changed—what do we do that disobeys the commands of care for those in need, compassion and dignity for others and claim we ignore them because of religious ritual or spiritual practices? God, have mercy on us and convert us to obedience of the basics of being human before You.

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: cci@claret.org; Websites: http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications Inc.) & http://missionaries.claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)

Quick-response team sought vs Ilocos killings

LAOAG CITY—Officials here are seeking the revival of a quick-response patrol team, similar to America's Dial 911, to control the rash of murders in the province.

The defunct Department of Public Safety, a project of then Ilocos Norte Gov. Rodolfo Fariñas, was deactivated shortly after Ferdinand Marcos Jr. became governor in 1998.

Marcos disabled the DPS patrol, a former emergency and relief unit manned by volunteer personnel, as soon as he started warming his seat early into his first term.

The DPS deactivation heated up the split between Marcos and Fariñas, who were former associates and political allies.

Marcos, who is still in Hawaii for an official business, could not be reached for comment.

Ilocos Norte mayors and vice mayors raised the restoration of the DPS patrol during a meeting on Thursday following the murder of Laoag Vice Mayor Jimmy Chua early Wednesday outside a videoke bar.

Acting Ilocos Norte Gov. Windell Chua pressed the alarm bell on the wave of murders with politicians as targets of suspected guns-for-hire operating in the province.

He convened the emergency meeting after the assassination of the vice mayor, the third official gunned down since November last year.

"We need to revive the DPS now. There was nothing wrong with it... why was it dismantled in the first place," an official said during the meeting.

Officials are also considering raising at least P100,000 as reward to anyone who can lead to the arrest of Chua's gunmen.

The officials also raised other proposals such as:

- Amending the law requiring motorists to use crash helmets.
- Implementing curfew hours and checkpoints in key areas.
- Arming village guards to help the police in implementing peace and order.
- Implementing a task force to crack down on loose firearms.
- Setting up a military detachment.
- Providing logistics to Air Force personnel and conducting aerial surveillance to track down gunmen.

Batac Mayor Jesus Nalupta Sr. said motorcycle riders must not be allowed to wear their crash helmets upon entering commercial districts so that they could be easily identified.

"We need to institute measures fast before all politicians end up dead. We should protect ourselves now, the next victim could be anyone of us," he said. *Cristina Arzadon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CIVIL LAW (PROPERTY)—Property of public dominion—It is not disputed that the lot on which petitioner's alleged "right of way" exists belongs to the state or property of public dominion. Property of public dominion is defined by Article 420 of the Civil Code. Public use is "use that is not confined to privileged individuals, but is open to the indefinite public." Records show that the lot on which the stairways were built is for the use of the people as passageway to the highway. Consequently, it is a property of public dominion. Property of public dominion is outside the commerce of man and hence it: (1) cannot be alienated or leased or otherwise be the subject matter of contracts; (2) cannot be acquired by prescription against the State; (3) is not subject to attachment and execution; and (4) cannot be burdened by any voluntary easement. Considering that the lot on which the stairways were constructed is a property of public dominion, it cannot be burdened by a voluntary easement of right of way in favor of herein petitioner. In fact, its use by the public is by mere tolerance of the government through the DPWH. Petitioner cannot appropriate it for himself. Verily, he cannot claim any right of possession over it. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Sandoval-Gutierrez, Third Division, Villarico vs Sarmiento, G.R. No. 136438, November 11, 2004]

BY R. B. VERA

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Docs sue hospital

THREE doctors have taken their employment woes to court by filing a civil suit against officials of a private hospital in Tondo that allegedly deprived them of their professional rights.

Doctors Evelyn Ong-Chuang, Zonia Lee-Lopez and Kim Le Dy-Tan of the Metropolitan Hospital on Masangkay Street, Tondo, Manila, filed a P500,000 damage suit against the hospital last Friday at the Manila Regional Trial Court Office of the Clerk of Court. The doctors alleged that they had lost their rights, or admitting privileges, to receive patients at the hospital. The complainants have been longtime practitioners at the hospital.

Admitting privileges gave doctors the right to bring in their patients to the hospital for medical purposes, and to use hospital facilities. *Tarra V. Quismundo and Christian P. Maglunog, trainee*

11 cops linked to Soriano sacked

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE MALATE station commander and 10 other Manila policemen were relieved from their posts yesterday because of their alleged links to Martin Soriano, a dismissed agent of the National Bureau of Investigation arrested recently on suspicions that he was involved in kidnapping for ransom activities.

The move came after Western Police District director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong received a report allegedly implicating the 11 Manila policemen in Soriano's "hulidap" activities, which involved arresting people, and later releasing them in exchange for money.

The highest-ranking policeman relieved was Supt. Marcelino Pedrozo, Malate police station commander (Station 9) and the district's former antidrug chief.

The INQUIRER earlier reported that a WPD superintendent was being investigated for his alleged involvement in the activities of Soriano, who was reportedly "protected" by seven Metro Manila police officers.

But Pedrozo yesterday denied that he was Soriano's cohort. He said he only met Soriano on Jan. 14 after they were introduced by a GMA 7 TV reporter.

Soriano was supposed to feed Pedrozo information about drug activities, but the operation did not push through. Pedrozo added that the former NBI asset had asked him for a mission order, but he said he was unable to produce one because he was only a station commander.

Pedrozo also said that he met Soriano for a second time when the latter requested him to release four drug suspects that Pedrozo's men had arrested. The Malate police chief said he did not grant Soriano's request.

The 10 other policemen relieved with Pedrozo were Insp. Casan Ali, the antidrug chief of the Malate police station; Malate police station operatives PO3 Rodolfo Enderina, PO2 Ernie Reyes, PO2 Alexander de los Reyes and PO2 Ronilo Marquez;

SPO2 Fernando Cantillas and PO1 Ramil de Guzman, both from the Ermita police station; SPO2 Elmer Manalang from the Sta. Mesa police station; PO1 Ronald Rivera from the Binondo police station, and PO2 Arsenio Tercino from the District Detective Beat Patrol Unit.

In a statement, Bulaong said that he was not saying the 11 men were involved in Soriano's illegal activities, but he said they could not return to their posts while an investigation into the matter is pending.

Bulaong had called for the investigation after receiving a report implicating the 11 men in "hulidap" activities with Soriano.

"As I had said before, the WPD does not tolerate police officers involved in illegal activities. We don't want to give them a chance to lure their colleagues to become like them," the WPD chief said.

Soriano's arrest on Jan. 31 for alleged kidnapping opened a can of worms after it was revealed that Soriano had reportedly received protection from high ranking law enforcers.

Soriano started as a civilian agent at the NBI, moving on to become an intelligence agent before his dismissal in 1999 after a checkered career with the bureau.

A ranking NBI official said yesterday that even before Soriano's arrest, the NBI had been looking for the former agent because he had failed to return two guns—a 9 mm and a long firearm—issued to him.

The source said a malversation case had been filed against the former "asset" for failing to turn in the guns after his dismissal from the service.

The frequent association of the NBI's name with Soriano had also irked NBI agents.

An agent said yesterday that Soriano was besmirching the bureau's name when he was not even a regular agent.

"We find it hard to accept that the NBI's name is being dragged into the issue," said the investigator.

"Martin Soriano was not even a regular agent," he added.

Mandaluyong pit: No danger, but an eyesore

By Luige A. del Puerto

WHAT HAS happened to the 20-meter excavation site at the corner of Ortigas Avenue and Edsa? What is being done to ensure no vehicle falls into the hole? And until when will it stay uncovered?

After a jeep full of people fell into an excavation site in Mandaluyong City last year, former Mayor Benhur Abalos said he wanted the open pit filled so it would not pose a danger to people. Current Mandaluyong Mayor Neptali "Boyet" Gonzales said he would look into it.

Vegetation has already hidden the pit and it seems it will take months before construction on the site can continue and before the hole is covered.

City Engineer Conrado Anciado described the abandoned excavation site as an "eyesore" but not a "danger" to bus and jeepney commuters.

Anciado said its safety railings would hold, unless a bus or a jeep at high speed smashed the fence.

"This is an intersection so buses and jeeps would normally slow down," he said, adding that there was no danger from soil erosion—the developer had supposedly seen to that. But he did say it would be better if the pit was leveled before construction resumed.

Anciado said the Department of Public Works and Highways had ordered EGI, site developer, to fill up the pit, but EGI appealed the decision. Construction in the area stopped after the Greenhills East Homeowners Association went to court to stop the project.

Say goodbye to new 'Smokey Mountain'

By Tarra V. Quismundo

PLANS are afoot to make the Pier 18 garbage dump in Tondo, Manila, "disappear."

"At the end of the year, our goal is to have zero waste at Pier 18," said Rafael Borromeo, Manila Department of Public Services (DPS) chief. The department is committed to enforce fully the Ecological Waste Management Act of 2000 (Republic Act 9003). By December, the DPS expects to clear the tons of trash at Pier 18, the open dump on a seven-hectare lot owned by the National Housing Authority that was shaping up as another Smokey Mountain.

Borromeo said RA 9003 prohibited open dumping and allowed only a controlled dump and a sanitary landfill.

A controlled dump resembles the open version but harmful fumes are suppressed and trash is compacted through a layer of soil on top of the waste. A sanitary landfill also involves layering trash with soil to minimize negative environmental impact.

Pier 18 is a garbage transfer station where Manila's contractor, Leonel Waste Management, has been dumping trash daily since 2002. Garbage is then hauled to a controlled dump in Navotas within the day.

The open dump used to hold as much as half a million tons of "old trash" from Manila and neighboring cities that used Pier 18 as a temporary dump from January 2001 to March 2002, when Metro Manila had a garbage crisis.

WPD chief overstaying at his post

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

CHIEF Supt. Pedro Bulaong, Western Police District (WPD) director, relieved yesterday 11 subordinates from their posts for allegedly being linked to the kidnapping and extortion activities of former NBI agent Martin Soriano.

Two of those sacked were Supt. Marcelino Pedrozo and Insp. Casan Ali of Station 9.

Pedrozo had been featured at least twice in my public service program, "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo," for abusive conduct.

According to my sources, Pedrozo is the fair-haired boy of Bulaong. Both graduated from the same school, the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA).

Bulaong's relief order was meant to preempt a supposed directive from higher-ups for the cops to be sacked.

Nothing will come out of the investigation into the cops' alleged links with Soriano if those conducting the probe are from the WPD," according to my sources there.

The investigation should be handled by either the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) or the national headquarters at Camp Crame.

* * *

By the way, there are whispers among the ranks about the corrupt activities of some WPD officials.

One official who was allegedly involved in "hulidap"—a police term for holdup and "huli" or arrest; in short, shakedown of a crime suspect—was killed by unidentified persons last year.

The official and his men arrested a young lad for drug possession. The cops did not immediately file a case against the boy, according to my sources at the WPD.

These sources said the cops demanded P10 million from the boy's father, a shipping magnate.

After negotiations between the cops and the boy's father failed, the cops filed a case against the boy with the Manila prosecutor's office, according to my spies..

The boy was released later because the case was only for drug possession. But several days after the boy was released, he was again arrested by the same cops who made the failed negotiations with the father.

The boy was found dead in Antipolo days later.

Not long after, the police officer, who led the team that arrested the boy, was ambushed and killed.

An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

The killing of the WPD officer was attributed to the New People's Army. But the NPA disowned the assassination.

It would be best for higher headquarters to look into this rumor. The rumor persists to this day even after many months have passed since the ambush.

* * *

Bulaong seems to be enjoying the confidence—too much confidence, in fact—of President Macapagal-Arroyo because he's not been transferred to another post even if he's been WPD chief for many years.

The longest that an officer can stay at his post is two years.

WPD directors are selected by Malacañang. One of the criteria is the director's closeness to the President.

But Bulaong has stayed far too long at his post. Many PNP officers who look at the WPD position with moist eyes are complaining.

Abu guest at Rotary meet

GEN. EFREN L. Abu, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, will be the guest of honor and speaker at the intercity meeting of around 40 Rotary clubs in Quezon City tonight at Tejeros Hall, Officers Club, Camp Aguinaldo. The Rotary Club of Kamuning, headed by President Philip Soriano, is host of the meeting.

Abu will talk on the issue of national security vis-a-vis the global threat of terrorism, corruption in the AFP, and the reforms he had initiated. District 3780 District Governor George L. Howard will deliver a brief message. RC Kamuning President Soriano will deliver the welcome address, with past President Nesty Isla as night chair.

National Power Corporation
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
NPC-MMSD 2005-003

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)-MMSD of NPC invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following requirements.

Schedule	Date/Time & Place of Bidding	Item Description	PR No./Inquiry No.	ABC
I	March 2, 2005 10:00 A.M.	Oil Containment Boom for PB 106	PB050201-MMAD2415 (PB2)	1,250,000.00
II	Pahiyas Room	Turbocharger, IHI for PB 120	PB050111-MMSB2319 (PB2)	3,000,000.00
III		Mechanical Parts for PLDPP-Mindoro/Romblon Area "Enterprise"	PB050302-MMVB2547	7,138,353.00
IV	March 2 2005 2:00 P.M. Pahiyas Room	Hauling of Diesel Fuel Oil from Shell Tabangao Depot Batangas to Pulang Lupa DPP Occ Mindoro	PB050302-MMKR2548	4 800 000 00
V	March 3, 2005 10:00 A.M. Kañao Room	Lubricating Oil 15W, SAE 40 multigrade for PLDPP Mindoro/Romblon Area	PB050303-MMER2549	360,000 00
VI		Lubricating Oil Multigrade SAE 15W-40 for MQNL Operations Division	PB050303-MMER2550	3,828,000.00
VII		Lubricating Oil, Multigrade, 15W40 for OM-Mindoro/Romblon Area	PB050303-MMER2551	7,320,000.00
VIII		Lubricating Oil SAE 15W-40 for Catanduanes/Masbate/Albay Optns. Div.	PB050303-MMER2552	6,460,000 00
IX	March 3, 2005 2:00 P.M.	Lubricating Oil, Caltex Delo 500 for Equiv for Pulang Lupa & Tablas DPP	PB050303-MMER2553	4,550,000.00
X	Kañao Room	Lubricating Oil, Marine SAE 50 for Marinawa DPP	PB050303-MMER2554	1,600,000.00
XI		Lube Oil for High Speed Automotive Diesel Engine for SAE 15W-40 for OM-Palawan Division	PB050303-MMER2555	3,458,000 00

NOTE A Pre-bidding Conference will be held for the following bidding schedules:

Schedule	Date	Time	Place
Schedule V-XI	Feb. 17, 2005	2:00 P.M.	Monones Function Room
Schedule I-IV	Feb. 17, 2005	3:00 P.M.	Monones Function Room

Complete sets of Application form for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be obtained from the Materials Management Services Division, Materials Management Dept., of NPC, Diliman, Quezon City with Tel. No. 924-5357/924-5477 upon payment of non-refundable fee of PHP500.00 per schedule starting on February 8, 2005, from 8:30 to 11:30 A.M. only. No bid documents will be issued 3 days before the date of bidding.

Bids will be received at the assigned Bidding Room, MMSD, MMD, NPC, Diliman, Quezon City on the date and time specified above after which Eligibility Requirements and Bid Proposals will be opened in the presence of attending bidders. Certificate of Registration issued by PSD/MMSD will be honored provided that the Certification is still valid.

Prospective Bidders shall signify conformance to bidding terms and conditions as required and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution in accordance with the IRR of Republic Act No 9184.

The Bidder shall furnish as part of his/her bid a bid security in the amount equivalent to a percentage of the approved budget for the contract to be bid in the form of Cash, Manager's/Cashier's Check, Irrevocable Letter of Credit – One Percent (1%), Bank Guarantee – One and a half percent (1.5%), Surety Bond – Two and a half percent (2.5%, penal and callable on demand issued by a Surety or Insurance Company accredited by the Office of the Insurance Commission.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation, without thereby incurring any of the following: a) liability whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids and b) obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the basis of the BAC's action.

(Sgd.) LORENZO S. MARCELO
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
MMSD-NPC

(PDI - February 8 & 15, 2005)

MARKETING CONVERGENCE

Marketing Institute of the Philippines
The Education and Training Arm of the
Philippine Marketing Association, Inc.

Presents a seminar on

BASICS OF MARKETING A TO Z

March 2, 3 & 4, 2005
1:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati

This seminar helps clear the confusion and jumble in marketing. Thus, it aims to give marketing executives the essential concepts and tools needed to design exceptional marketing programs and effectively function as marketing practitioners.

Target Participants
This seminar is specifically designed for those who may already be doing a marketing management function but whose academic preparation is not marketing. They can be front-line, mid- and upper-level managers in brand management, sales, customer relations, advertising, promotions, media and public relations.

Seminar Objectives
At the end of this seminar on **Basics of Marketing A to Z**, participants will know the key marketing concepts like the macro and micro of marketing, 4P's (product, place, price and promotion), consumer behavior and target marketing.

Methodology
Lectures, exercises, and in-class application projects relate specifically to the workplace, hence, participants can immediately apply new concepts and skills. Resource speakers are multi-awarded marketing practitioners who will share their experiences and insights about the Basics of Marketing.

SEMINAR PROGRAM

Day 1 – March 2, 2005 (Wednesday)
Introductory Session – 1:00 – 1:30 pm
Basic Business and Marketing concepts
Session Chair: **Ms. Marivic Ac-Ac**
Professor
San Beda College

Session 1 – 1:30 – 3:30 pm
The Enigma of Marketing Mix in Today's Business Environment
Speaker: **Ms. Marivic Ac-Ac**
Professor
San Beda Collage

Session 2 – 3:45-5:30 pm
How Consumer Analysis Affects Business Strategy
Speaker: **Mr. Ricardo de Vera**
President
Pin Point Direct Marketing

BRIEFING ON THE FINAL PROJECT – 5:45 – 6:00 pm

Day 2 – March 3, 2005 (Thursday)
Link Up Session – 1:00 – 1:30 pm

Session 3 – 1:30 – 3:30 pm
Crucial Areas in Market Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning
Speaker: **Ms. Ma. Teresa V. Gargantiel***
Senior Executive Officer.
Jimenez Basic

Session 4 - #:45 – 5:30 pm
Mapping the Winning Strategies for Tougher Times
Speaker: **Ms. Vivian Faustino**
Assistant Vice President
International Exchange Bank

BRAINSTORMING – 5:30 – 6:00 PM

Day 3 – March 4, 2005 (Friday)
Link Up Session – 1:00 – 1:30 pm

Session 5 – 1:30 – 3:30 pm
Connecting with your Consumers through Effective Communication
Speaker: **MR. ANTONIO S. VENTOSA***
Managing Director
Leo-Burnett

PRESENTATION OF CASES/SUMMATION – 3:45 – 5:30 pm
*speaker to be confirmed

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2005

METRO

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SUERTRES 9 3 2 (In exact order)

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C5 Road now open to motorists

By Margaux C. Ortiz

WITH THE inauguration yesterday of a new flyover on C5 Road, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) hopes to improve the traffic flow on Edsa by reducing the number of vehicles plying the main thoroughfare.

"Motorists on Edsa can now use C5 without any hassle," MMDA Traffic Operations Center Executive Director Angelito Vergel de Dios told the INQUIRER.

The C5/Boni Serrano Avenue-Katipunan Avenue Interchange Project took three years to complete.

Vergel de Dios said that during the project's construction, the traffic's tail-end on the northbound lane had reached Eastwood and Quirino Labor Hospital on the southbound lane.

"Now, motorists would be encouraged to take C5 and use the flyover from Libis to Katipunan," the traffic chief said.

The P679-million project is a complex interchange that involved the construction of a 272-meter long, four-lane flyover connecting E. Rodriguez and Boni Serrano Avenues, and a 200-meter long, four-lane tunnel connecting Boni Serrano and Katipunan Avenues.

The project is also complemented by service roads along E. Rodriguez, Katipunan Avenue, and Boni Serrano Avenue; the widening of Katipunan from the intersection until St. Ignatius Subdivision; and landscape work.

Earlier, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) had encountered problems on road right-of-way acquisition and limited resources during the project's construction.

Considered the missing link in the C5 Road network, the interchange project was completed on Jan. 7.

DPWH officials said the project is expected to improve the traffic situation in the area, enhance the overall traffic distribution in Metro Manila, and shorten the travel time of people, goods and services.

Local government units like Quezon City, Marikina, Pasig, Taguig, Makati, Mandaluyong and Pateros could anticipate additional sources of revenue and funds from new investments, and an increase in land value and property taxes in the project's immediate vicinity, officials added.

Drivers irked by long lines to get TVRs

TRANSPORT operators may have gotten their way with the recent issuance of a temporary restraining order against three of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority's traffic schemes, but their drivers are grumbling.

Forming a long line at the agency's remaining redemption center in Makati City, the drivers of different public utility vehicles yesterday complained about the revival of the Traffic Violation Receipt (TVR) scheme.

More convenient

"We prefer the Metropolitan Traffic Ticket (MTT) scheme because it is more convenient for us," bus driver James Aguinaldo (not his real name) told reporters in an interview outside the TVR redemption center.

Aguinaldo, who had lined up for almost an hour to redeem his license, said the MTT scheme enabled him to easily pay his fines in any Metrobank branch in between bus stops, without having his license confiscated by the traffic enforcer.

"With the MTT, I could even ask other people to pay the fine for me at the bank," he said.

The TVR scheme, however, forced Aguinaldo to redeem his license even if it was his day-off.

Allies

The bus driver said he is a member of the Integrated Metro Bus Operators Association (Imboa), one of the transport groups that filed a complaint against the MMDA's MTT, No Contact Traffic Apprehension (NCTA) and the Organized Bus Route (OBR).

Jeepney driver Albert Mahinay and delivery van driver Efren Bugarin agreed with Aguinaldo, saying the revival of the old scheme had prevented them from plying their routes and earning extra income.

Judge Cesar Santamaria, of the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 145, had earlier issued a 20-day TRO on the three MMDA traffic schemes onJan. 29.

The restraining order was in response to a petition by nine transport groups which claimed that the implementation of the schemes trampled on their constitutional right to due process, "which necessarily includes their right to life."

In favor of TRO

Other groups that favored the TRO were the Pinagisang Samahan ng mga Tsuper Operators Nationwide (Piston), Philippine Confederation of Drivers and Operators-Alliance of Concerned Transport Operators (PCDO-ACTO), Alliance of Transport Operators and Drivers Association of the Philippines (Altodap), Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association (Fejodap), Makati Jeepney Operator and Driver Alliance (MJODA), North East Manila Bus Operators Group (Nembog) and Provincial Bus Operators Association of the Philippines (PBOAP).

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando, on the other hand, said he "commiserated with the drivers' suffering."

"We had to stop our traffic schemes in deference to the court, and at the expense of our motorists," he added. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

Makati tops tax collection drive in Metro

THE COUNTRY'S richest city, which houses the biggest businesses and commercial centers, is also the biggest tax earner in Metro Manila.

Makati City posted around P6.6 billion in total tax collections for 2004, according to a report from the city treasury office.

A large chunk of this amount came from business licenses collections which contributed some P2 billion; P3 billion came from real property taxes.

"The increase in our collection makes us more financially stable and more capable to deliver better services to our residents and clientele," Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay said in a statement yesterday.

The country's financial capital will allocate the biggest bulk of their budget to education and health, said Makati Information and Community Relations head Joey Salgado.

"We are putting up six new school buildings this year, and the construction of the Makati Central Police Station and an Olympic-size swimming pool in JP Rizal Extension is also in the works," he added.

Barangay realty tax payment centers were recently put up in 11 barangays as part of the city's drive to increase its revenues. *Irene C. Perez*

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Compiled by L. Mangulat

BASKETBALL: US NCAA—Syracuse vs UConn; 8 a.m. (r-9:30 p.m.); Oklahoma vs Oklahoma State; 10 a.m.; ESPN—Bitter rivals collide in the US NCAA.
NBA-Sixers vs Nets; 8:30 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Solar Sports—Atlantic Division rivals Philadelphia and New Jersey tangle at the Continental Airlines Arena.
AMERICAN FOOTBALL: Super Bowl XXXIX; 4 p.m.; ESPN—Take another look at the battle for football supremacy between the New England Patriots and the Philadelphia Eagles.
Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

Jewels eye breakthrough victory

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

WELCOAT'S Marvin Ortiguerra and Leo Najorda grapple for the ball.

GAME TODAY (*Makati Coliseum*)
3:30 p.m.—Montaña vs Welcoat
(Game 4 of best-of-five finals)

AFTER moving within a win of the title in the PBL Open Championship last Saturday, the Montaña Jewels decided to temper their excitement.

"We just need one more win but this doesn't mean the series is over," said Alex Compton, who will try to lead the Jewels to their first crown against the Welcoat Paintmasters in Game 4 of the championship series at 3:30 p.m. today at the Makati Coliseum.

"Welcoat is capable of coming back," said coach Robert Sison, whose Jewels took a commanding 2-1 lead after a 77-67 Game 3 victory. "They're a very strong team and I have a lot of respect for their coaching staff. But if they are in my position, they'd also want to finish it in Game 4. So we're going all out."

"The momentum is on our side so it's just a question of how we could sustain it," added Sison. "It's a history-making mission for us so we're really motivated to win the series."

The Paintmasters, though, are similarly motivated in forging a winner-take-all showdown on Thursday.

"There will be a game on Thursday," vowed Welcoat coach Caloy Garcia. "We are positive about it and the boys are actually aching to redeem themselves."

In fact, Garcia pointed out that his Paintmasters are very capable of staging a comeback.

Garcia noted that in the semifinals, fourth-seed Welcoat stunned league-leader Magnolia-FEU twice after losing Game 1 of the playoff series. Thus the young coach felt there's no reason they can't repeat the feat to bag the championship crown.

Compton has been giving the Paintmasters a big headache. The sweet-shooting guard has been carrying the load for the Jewels in the finals series by averaging 18.7 points.

"Everyone knows he's a heartbreaker," Sison proudly said of his veteran leader.

Compton also finally got help from Jon Dan Salvador, who found his scoring touch after two forgettable performances. The league's Most Valuable Player shot 17 points and grabbed 15 rebounds in Game 3.

Welcoat, meanwhile, will again lean on top rookie Anthony Washington and veterans Chester Tolomia and Marvin Ortiguerra.

However, Garcia added that his team must have little room for error. Welcoat averaged 26.3 turnovers, while the Jewels tallied only 16.

"We have to minimize our turnovers," noted Garcia. "If we can't, *mahihirapan kami* (we'll have a hard time)." *Jasmine W. Payo*

Ginebra comes up short in key stretch

By June Navarro

PDI PHOTO

TANQUINGCEN

SIOT Tanquingcen has again taken full responsibility for Barangay Ginebra's Game 4 fold-up against the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals.

But statistics showed the Kings self-destructed in a decisive stretch of Sunday's game, committing a handful of errors, blowing freethrows and missing baskets that allowed the Phone Pals to tie the Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup best-of-seven championship series at 2-2.

"Those were endgame miscues but still, I could have done something about it. Coaches are hired to make decisions, certain decisions at certain situations," said Tanquingcen.

Mark Caguioa missed a couple of three-pointers, Rodney Santos blew a mid-range jumper and Erik Menk was assessed a three-second violation aside from missing all his four freethrows in the final minutes.

All told, the Kings missed 11 of 25 freethrows while the three-second violation of this conference's MVP capped the team's 24 turnovers overall.

"Hopefully, we could find a solution. It all boiled down to making foul shots and taking care of the ball," said Tanquingcen, whose Kings took an early 2-0 series lead.

Still, Tanquingcen praised the Kings for a satisfactory job, especially Caguioa, who exploded for 43 points following a lethargic showing in Game 3.

"He (Caguioa) played a hell of a game and I'm happy with the way the team played," said Tanquingcen. "Again, it's not their fault. I could have made some quick adjustments but I did not."

With the series reduced to a best-of-three affair, Tanquingcen believes endgame execution and stamina would be critical for both teams.

"Nothing's going to be easy from now until the end," said Tanquingcen.

"But one thing's for sure, every time people question us or start doubting us, that's the time we play our best."

Meanwhile, the Court of Appeals has ordered Davonn Harp of Red Bull to correct four procedural infirmities in his petition to overturn a Justice department finding that he faked his Filipino citizenship.

Harp, who has long left the country, has been given 10 days to correct the infirmities under the pain of dismissal of his petition.

The court said the petition lacked a verified statement on material dates, it was not served personally to the respondents, the attachments were not certified true copies and the Integrated Bar of the Philippines official receipt number of his lawyer "appeared to be outdated." *With a report from Philip Tubeza*

New venues for 4 more SEAG events

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee yesterday took drastic measures to cut expenses by moving four sports disciplines out of the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex and Philsports in Pasig which need to undergo multimillion-peso facelifts.

In reaction to the INQUIRER story regarding the P100-million rehabilitation cost of facilities owned and operated by the Philippine Sports Commission, Philsoc officials said the committee has decided to take table tennis, gymnastics, badminton and wrestling out of the RMSC and Philsports.

Of the four, only gymnastics, originally set at Ninoy Aquino Stadium, has found a new site, the World Trade Center along Roxas Boulevard. Badminton, supposedly slated at Philsports, is reportedly transferring to an unspecified venue in Mandaluyong.

Table tennis and wrestling, earlier slated at Philsports and Rizal Multi-Purpose Hall, respectively, are still looking for new venues in an attempt to avoid multimillion renovation jobs at the PSC-supervised facilities.

"They want to save money on the construction or repairs," said Dindo Danao, the Philsoc spokesperson.

The repair and rehabilitation of venues is expected to cost P100 million, but Congress has allotted the Philippine Sports Commission only P30 million for the purpose.

Danao added that the Philsoc is also expected to enter into an agreement with owners of private venues to be used for the SEA Games to come up with a uniform policy on all privately owned venues in Metro Manila, Subic, Bacolod and Cebu City.

The move came on the heels of reports that P80 million will be needed to repair the Rizal track and field stadium, P15 million for the NAS and P5 million for the Tennis Center. The amount does not include the cost of repairs for the Rizal Multi-Purpose and the Philsports.

Meanwhile, Philsoc vice chair and Philippine Olympic Committee president Peping Cojuangco and POC first vice president and Philsoc official Rep. Monico Puentevella will meet with prospective sponsors tomorrow to formalize their partnership for the SEA Games.

"We are meeting some big companies on Wednesday," said Puentevella after the Philsoc meeting held at Cojuangco's office in Makati.

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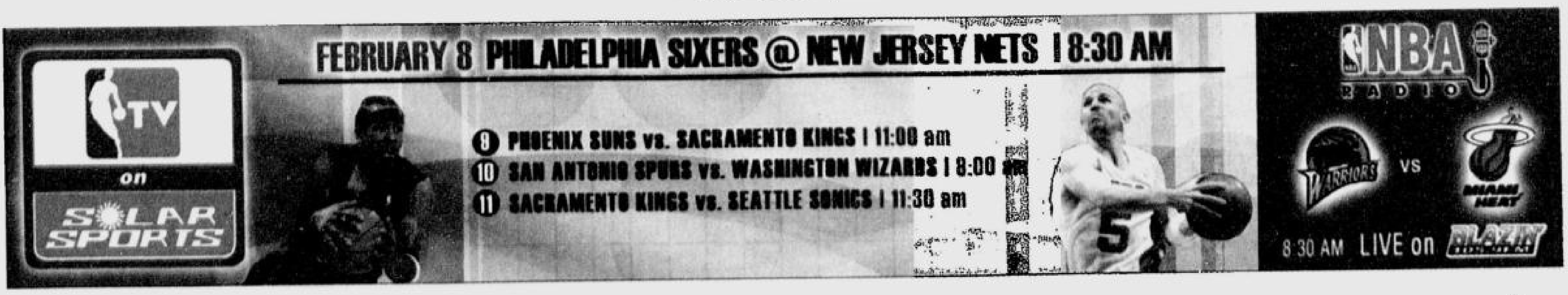
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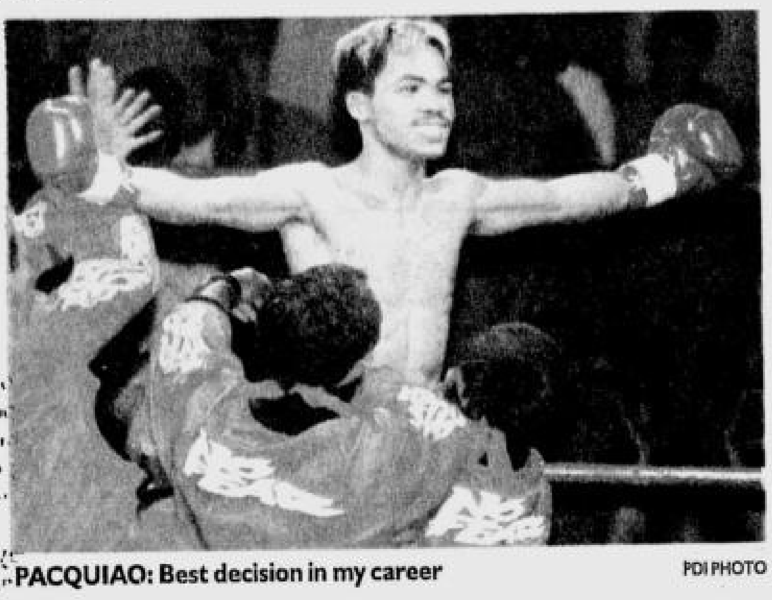

PACQUIAO: Best decision in my career PDI PHOTO

Pacquiao says finances safe with new group

REIGNING Ring Magazine featherweight king Manny Pacquiao yesterday announced he has "made the best decision in his career" in hooking up with New York-based manager Shelly Finley.

Saying he has never been happier in his pro boxing life, Pacquiao said the change in handlers has brought him peace of mind as he prepares for his 12-round brawl with Mexican legend Erik Morales on March 19 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

In a long-distance interview with Mike Enriquez over dzBB, Pacquiao said he feels comfortable with his new team, made up of Finkel and lawyers Keith Davidson and Nicholas Khan.

Pacquiao added he was assured by his new management of better accounting of his finances, and that he would be given a chance to personally see to it that everybody in the team gets his fair share of the pie after each fight.

For the first time, the Filipino boxing star said he would be personally handing out the respective share in his purse for his trainer, cutman, and conditioning coach.

Pacquiao said he expects to get a fair share of the pay-per-view and other television uptakes, and that a transparent management team should deal with that.

"I have full trust in my new management team because I know they have the experience and expertise to make things work," said Pacquiao, as quoted by US-based journalist Winchell Campos yesterday.

Pacquiao, who has transferred to a better apartment located in the heart of Hollywood, is currently in the sparring period of his training at coach Freddie Roach's Wild Card Boxing Gym. So far, he has been in sharp form against bigger boys like Ray Beltran, Justin Juuko and Javier Garcia.

Personal trainer and boyhood bùddy Buboy Fernandez said that all Pacquiao needs at this point is to get back the proper timing in his punches, and everything is expected to fall into the right place.

Salven Lagumbay, Contributor

Arroyo, FVR banner Celebrities Tourney cast today at Riviera

TOP personalities in business, government and sports will be in attendance when the Celebrity Tournament of the Konica Minolta Pro-Am is held today at Riviera's Langer course in Silang, Cavite.

First Gentleman Mike Arroyo is expected to grace the occasion, both as a hitter of the ceremonial ball and his schedule permitting—a participant in the event where 40 of the country's top pros are seeing action.

The 18-hole event fired shotgun-style will precede the NGAP-sanctioned Konica Minolta Pro-Am set Feb. 9-12, with a whopping P1.5 million pot distributed to the Top 30 finishers among a field of 110 teams.

Today's Celebrity Tournament will award cash, merchandise and trophies to the winners, on top of the all-new, powerful Toyota Hi-Lux, the hole-in-one prize at No. 4.

Also expected to play today are former President Ramos, NGAP president Benny Gopez, Riviera president Comm. Danny Pizarro (ret.), PSC OIC Butch Ramirez, Toyota Motor Philippines' Danny Isla and NGAP chair Rod V. Feliciano.

They will be paired among 40 of the country's pros led by Mars Pucay, Antonio Lascuña and former Philippine Open champion Robert Pactolerin in the tournament supported by Riso, Epson, Brother Office, Casio, Okamura, Planex Network, Service-Master, Pagcor, Mizuno, DHL-WWW Express, PSC, Bravo Golf and Rowell Group.

ARROYO

RAMOS

BRAVO

Among those taking part are Takatoshi Kawakami, president of Brother International, Tomoyuki Koike, president of Phlippine Resins Industries Inc. and Motoi Azumi, EVP, Philippine Resins Industries Inc.

"Finally, we are all go," said U-Bix Corporation owner Bert Bravo, who revived the revered Pro-Am in 2001 in partnership with Commodore Pizarro. "We will surely have some keen competition but certainly, though, we will have fun in the sun."

The Konica Minolta Pro-Am will blast off tomorrow ending Saturday, with a total pot of P1.5 million going to the Top 30 finishers.

Gerard Cantada and JR Tanpinco will defend their crown as they chase the nearly P200,000 top prize staked by Bravo and Shoei Yamana, the executive director of Konica Minolta Business Technologies Corporation of Japan.

Cantada and Tanpinco beat Ruel Banares and Marvin Dumandan in the sudden-death playoff, with Banares missing a four-footer to extend the battle.

Agojo leads entries of Southern Ladies

JAYVIE Agojo heads the èlite cast in the centerpiece championship division of the Southern Ladies Open golf tournament, which fires off Feb. 17 at the Pueblo de Oro Golf and Country Club in Cagayan de Oro City.

Agojo hopes to dish out the same game that netted her a string of victories, including the RP Ladies Open and the Nick Faldo tournament in Hong Kong last month.

Lora Roberto and Anya Tanpinco, teammates of Agojo in last year's World Amateurs in Puerto Rico, where the Philippines placed 18th, will be the main rivals of Agojo in the 54-hole tournament organized and conducted by the National Golf Association of the Philippines (NGAP) in cooperation with Pueblo de Oro GCC Ladies Chapter.

Also in the fold are RP Ladies Open winner and veteran campaigner Carmelette Villaroman, Tracy Locsin, Lina de Guzman and Aileen Chua.

AGOJO

Around 80 players are vying for top honors in various divisions of the event which stakes a brand new Mizuno Euros Ladies golf set and a 29-inch flat TCL TV as hole-in-one prizes.

For details, contact NGAP at 525-6987 or 524-5160.

La Salle vs Letran for 2nd finals slot

GAME TODAY (*Rizal Memorial Coliseum*)
4 p.m.—La Salle vs Letran

EXPECT La Salle to come out strong and atone for its unexpected fold-up last Sunday. But expect Letran to come out even stronger and prove that its stunning come-from-behind victory over the highly fancied squad was no fluke.

That makes today's lone game at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum doubly exciting with the Lady Archers and the Lady Knights disputing the second and last finals berth in the Shakey's V-League second conference.

After getting swept in the opener of their best-of-three semis series, the Lady Knights pulled off a stunning 14-25, 22-25, 25-19, 25-13, 15-11 win, their first over the Lady Archers in four outings last Sunday, forcing a playoff for the right to face the UST Tigresses in the championship.

Drawing firepower from first conference MVP Mary Jean Balse, the defending champions Tigresses beat Philippine Sports Commission in straight sets to clinch the first seat in the best-of-three finals of this event sponsored by Shakey's Pizza.

The championship is set Thursday, also at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

Blocking, good reception and a big fighting heart, according to Letran coach Nes Pamilar, carried the Lady Knights to that victory and he hopes to draw the same from his wards in a bid to spoil the projected UST-La Salle final duel.

"It's going to be hard winning two straight against a strong team like La Salle," said Pamilar, who will again lean on Cherry Rose Macatangay, Joan Botor-Carpio, Bangladesh Pantaleon, Dianne Diaz and Khristine Basco. "But if we can block and receive well and play with a lot of heart, nothing is impossible."

The Lady Archers would be led by the Carolino sisters—Michelle and Mayette.

The tournament is co-presented by Dunkin Donuts, HBC Home of Beauty Exclusives, Smart and PLDT with Mikasa and Accel as official volleyball and outfitter, respectively.

SPORTSWATCH

Jaro keeps RP junior fly title

SONNY Boy Jaro easily retained his Philippine junior flyweight title Sunday by knocking out Jojo Bardon in the second round of a scheduled 12-rounder at the San Carlos City Auditorium. The well-conditioned Jaro sent Bardon to the canvas twice before the referee stopped the one-sided fight in two minutes and 58 seconds of the second frame. "Jaro was simply too strong for his rival. Bardon's defense also left much to be desired," said GAB-7 chief Celso Miranda, who supervised the fight with assistant Rolando Mendoza. Jaro won by decision over Bardon in their first meeting. In the chief support, veteran Noel Sungahid stopped greenhorn Joel Consulta by technical knockout at the end of the fourth round. In other bouts, Aljun Salugaol TKO'd Jayson Geda at 2:34 of the third; Gabriel Pumar halted Jerry Lota at 1:47 of the fourth; Alex Aroy decisioned Elmar Francisco; and Charles Delada stopped Sonny Saguing at 2:51 of the fourth.

Salven Lagumbay, Contributor

Gabi's Indon foe arriving Thursday

DIOSDADO "Prince" Gabi, the World Boxing Council's No. 8 flyweight contender, tangles anew with Indon Jimmy Pinontoan this Saturday in a 10-round clash capping a dinner-boxing show at the Royal Mandaya Hotel in Davao City. Pinontoan, who fought Gabi to a draw on June 13, 2002 in Indonesia, is expected to hit town Thursday along with promoter Pino Bahari. Gabi has been promised by his manager, North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol, a stint at the Wild Card Boxing Club of renowned trainer Freddie Roach in Los Angeles if he beats Pinontoan. Roach had described Gabi as a future world champion when he came to the Philippines late last year to personally handle the training of Ring Magazine featherweight champion Manny Pacquiao. The southpaw Gabi (23-2-1, 17 KOs), is coming off impressive victories over Thais Sairung Suwanasil and Saensak Singmanasak. Gabi had earlier annexed the WBC International flyweight crown with a technical decision win over Randy Mangubat in 2003.

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

FG meets with SEAG athletes today

AFTER fulfilling his vow of continued support for Filipino athletes gearing up for the 2005 Southeast Asian Games, First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo will now meet with national athletes and coaches to personally hear their concerns during a fellowship gathering today at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium. Joining Arroyo in the fellowship meeting are Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) officer-in-charge William "Butch" Ramirez and PSC commissioners Leon Montemayor, Ambrosio de Luna and Michael Barredo. "Commitment by government, as well as the private sector through the unwavering support of the First Gentleman, will not cease pouring into the training and preparation of national athletes for the SEA Games," said Ramirez. Also expected to attend are Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco and heads of various national sports associations Recently, the Medalyang Ginto, May Laban Tayo! fund-raising project initiated by the First Gentleman for Filipino athletes reached P150 million, coming from the country's top corporations.

NCA 7-cock derby features 60 matches

ABOUT 60 fierce matches are in store for aficionados in another edition of National Cockers Association (NCA) 7-cock derby today at the fully air-conditioned Araneta Coliseum. Today's hosts are Reps. Ronnie Puno (Sundance) and Gerry "Boy" Espina (Mt. Panamao). The 3-cock elimination round will start at 4 p.m. The championship round (4-cock) is on Thursday, Feb. 10. Three entries shared the title in last week's 7-cock event: Lucky Rin Firefly Binangonan II of Rene Medina and Ric de Guzman, Binangonan Balbina of Gov. Ito Ynares and former ambassador Danding Cojuangco and VGB Escalibur of Vice Gov. Boyet Joson. Meanwhile, cockers and breeders who wish to join the NCA stag derbies in September, must present their cockerels for screening. For schedule of farm-to-farm screening, contact the NCA secretariat at 911-3101 or 911-2928 (look for Dong Lamuste or Gloria Avena).

'Karera Para sa Puso' at San Lazaro

THE SENATE Spouses Foundation Inc. and the Manila Jockey Club Inc. have joined hands to spearhead the staging of the P500,000 "Karera Para Sa Puso-3" on Sunday at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite. This event was organized in support of the SSFI's program to build "Centers for the Elderly and Sick" throughout the country. "Once more we welcome the generous support of the Manila Jockey Club in providing the Foundation with an ideal venue to raise the much-needed funds for its charitable programs," said SSFI president Milagros Drilon, wife of Senate President Franklin Drilon. "Karera Para Sa Puso-3" marks another rematch between track rivals Cover Girl and Empire King. Other SSFI officials are Alma Susana Flavier, vice president; Katherine Gordon, secretary; Cynthia Villar, treasurer; Felicitas Arroyo, legal counsel and Precy Ejercito, public relations officer.

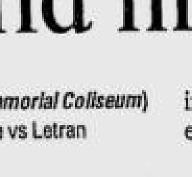
RACING TIPS

AT SLLP BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Feng Shui 2. Princess Sarah 3. Caballero 4. Kaori Yoks
Race 2—1. Dance Till Dawn 2. Paradise 3. Bubble Gum 4. Best Hand
Race 3—1. Calvin's Magic 2. Mika Mix 3. Doctor Steve 4. Power of the Wind
Race 4—1. Golden Africa 2. Divine Right 3. JJ's Friend 4.Dulce My Love 5. La Española
Race 5—1. Alexi's Magic 2. Blazing Maldini
Race 6—1. Do It David 2. Western Dancer 3. Snow Princess 4. Guest House 5. Sound of the Wind
Race 7—1. Join the Saints 2.Gabriela 3. Gentleman's Lady 4. All Class
Race 8—1. Speed Admiral 2. Holy King 3. Well Noted 4. Fille D'Honneur 5. Refreshing 6. Amazing Firenze/Gonfalon Story

New name, same luster

SPECTATOR



Al S. Mendoza

THE LANGER course of Riviera in Silang, Cavite, becomes the battleground starting today of the country's most unique golf tournament.

The Konica Minolta National Pro/Am is unique in the sense that it is the only tournament that pits golf teams composed of a professional and an amateur, who will hit alternately at a single ball until it is holed out.

From its birth in 1958 at Fort Bonifacio through a clutch of creative golfers led by Taby Tabaniag, the Pro/Am took off amid a confluence of events but with the rallying point that galvanized the thoughts of its founders: Teamwork.

For decades, the Fort Bonifacio Pro/Am was the envy of all of Asia's practitioners of the sport, particularly organizers from different parts of the region who could only shake their heads in awe over what many consider as "the only tournament of its kind in the world."

The Fort Bonifacio was the Pro/Am's permanent home, until the tournament fell victim to modernization, if not commercialism. In 1996, the Fort Bonifacio layout was privatized. The course was soon bulldozed to give way to skyscrapers and other symbols of high living, like plush restaurants, establishments and condominiums.

But in 2001, a kindred soul named Bert Bravo helped revive the Pro/Am. Together with Comm. Danny Pizarro, the duo linked up with Taby and it didn't take them long to finalize plans for the revival of the Pro/Am.

So, in November 2001, the U-BIX Riviera National Pro/Am was born. Noli Kempis and Erwin Vinluan won the event's inaugural/revival, beating the father-and-son tandem of Juanito and Juvic Pagunsan in the sudden-death playoff.

The next three years saw all the country's top pros pair with the nation's top amateurs, tangling at Riviera's Couples (2002) and Langer (2001 and 2003).

In no time, the luster and prestige of the Pro/Am was back.

In 2004, Bert Bravo, who owns U-BIX Corporation, begged off from staging the Pro/Am—but it cost him.

"I'm moving the event to 2005 but I'll increase the pot to P1.5 million," Bert told Comm. Pizarro and the other members of the organizing committee. "How does that sound to you?"

They could only nod in agreement.

Bert had said then that Konica Minolta, Japan's giant maker of copiers which will partner with U-BIX in the Philippines starting this April, has agreed to take an active participation in the Pro/Am—thus the renaming of the tournament to Konica Minolta Pro/Am.

New name, same classic.

And so, at 9 a.m. today at Riviera's Langer, the Pro/Am's Celebrity Tournament will be fired off by Bert Bravo, with First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, former President Ramos, Toyota Motor Philippines' Danny Isla and NGAP president Benny Gopez, among others, expected to hit the ceremonial balls.

The all-new, all-powerful Toyota Hi-Lux will be a hole-in-one prize at Langer's No. 4, the same hole where the same Hi-Lux pickup will be staked in the four-day series ending Feb. 12.

Taby Tabaniag, one of the few survivors (if, indeed, there are still other survivors out there, please come forward?) of the original authors of the tournament in 1958, is not playing. But he will still be present—as the tournament's chief rules man.

At 85 years of age, Taby is as fit as an ox. Ask him what's his blood pressure is and he'll readily answer, "Two hundred."

What's that?

"That's one hundred twenty over eighty," is Taby's standard reply. "Isn't that 200?"

***

FASTBREAK. I raise my glass to Mayor Jerry L. Pelayo of Candaba, Pampanga, for his swift action in causing the arrest of dog thieves last weekend. Already famous for his ardent espousal of the protection of migratory birds (Candaba experiences a yearly influx of migratory birds, especially during the cold months), Pelayo has saved seven dogs from dog dealers that invaded his turf. The seven dogs are now under the care of the Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) and are up for adoption. May your tribe increase, Mayor Pelayo.

NEW DYNASTY

Patriots retain Super Bowl

MVP Deion Branch in action AP

JACKSONVILLE, Florida—Winning their third Super Bowl title in four years, the New England Patriots left no doubt that they are among the greatest American football teams ever assembled.

Tom Brady threw for 236 yards and two touchdowns while Deion Branch matched a Super Bowl record with 11 catches for 133 yards and New England's defense forced four turnovers in a 24-21 victory over Philadelphia here Sunday.

The Patriots matched Dallas as the only teams to capture three crowns in four seasons and stretched their playoff win streak to a record nine games, dominating their era in a manner few clubs have approached.

"It establishes our dominance," Patriots safety Rodney Harrison said. "You want to talk about the other teams like Dallas? You want to put us in that company? Now we've done something to earn the right to be put in that company."

Patriots offensive coordinator Charlie Weis, who is leaving to coach the University of Notre Dame, has adopted the team's approach about avoiding the word "dynasty." But few others fit.

"We've never used that word, but three out of four ain't bad," Weis said. "It's sweet to end the season like this. There's nothing more I can say. I'm delighted for this team. I would like to see them win and win and win." Mike Vrabel, a linebacker who switches to offense in goal-line situations, caught a two-yard touchdown pass from Brady, his fifth touchdown in as many receptions. He cannot see the Patriots' reign coming to an end any time soon.

"I don't think we're done," Vrabel said. "These guys have got a lot of football left in them."

No one realizes that any more than Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb, who was intercepted four times, the last by Harrison with nine seconds remaining to seal the New England triumph.

"What they have done the last four years has been greatness," McNabb said. "Tom Brady and the Patriots have done a great job of playing together."

Patriots coach Bill Belichick became the all-time winningest NFL playoff coach, surpassing Green Bay legend Vince Lombardi by stretching his mark to 10-1. But he refuses to link teams from different seasons.

"We don't look at it that way," Belichick said. "I'll leave the comparisons and historical perspectives to everybody else." Brady adopted the same tone, a sly grin betraying him as he enjoyed underrating his team.

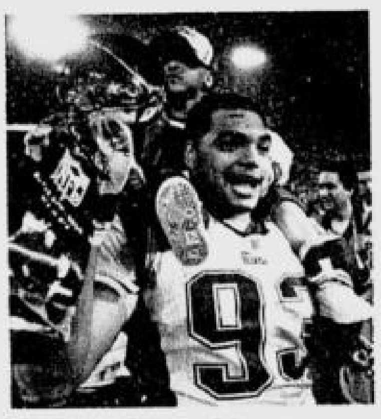
"You guys all want me to say it but I'm not going to say it," Brady said. "I don't think we ever approached it as three out of four. We never really self-proclaimed anything. That's not our style.

"We really are a team. In four seasons I've never had a receiver complain about not getting the ball. I've never had a running back complain about not getting enough carries.

"It's not so much for us about what we have accomplished in the grand scheme of things. You can lose track every day. You take one at a time and realize how tough they are." Patriots guard Joe Andruzzi said the team's working man spirit is part of why they are a success.

"We're a bunch of fat guys with a couple lunch pails that come to work," he said. "A lot of people don't give us respect. This is unbelievable. Nobody could imagine this." Next year, the Patriots will try to become the first team to win three Super Bowls in a row. But these Patriots worry about later when it arrives.

"I just know we're champions of the world now," Harrison said. "And I'm going to enjoy it." *AFP*



PATRIOTS Richard Seymour celebrates with the Vince Lombardi Trophy. AP

Ex-presidents make plea for tsunami aid

JACKSONVILLE, Florida—Former United States presidents Bill Clinton and George Bush appeared at Super Bowl 39 here Sunday, making an appeal for relief contributions to aid victims of the Asian tsunami disaster.

"What we're trying to do is raise as much as we can and make sure it's well spent," Clinton said. "This affects not only the rest of the world but our children's future too."

Democrat Clinton defeated Republican incumbent Bush, the father of current US President George W. Bush, in the 1992 US presidential election. But the rivals have united to help raise money for victims of the disaster.

"We view this as very important work," Bush said. "This transcends politics. This is more important. This is about saving lives."

The two former presidents were appointed by current President Bush to head up private fundraising for relief efforts in the wake of the Dec. 26 tsunamis.

They appeared in the on-field pre-game ceremonies, which this year paid tribute to World War II veterans, and made their relief pitch on the Fox television network's pre-game show broadcast from the venue.

Clinton was named by current President Bush as a UN envoy with a mission to try and close the gap between an estimated 12 million dollars in destruction and the six million dollars in global relief money pledges.

"They want me to make sure the long-term reconstruction is successful," Clinton said. "They want me to go hit on these governments for the rest of this money and try to prevent future disasters if we can." *AFP*

Owens sure Eagles will be back

PATRIOTS head coach Bill Belichick is doused after the Patriots beat the Eagles. AP

JACKSONVILLE, Florida—Terrell Owens barely made it onto the field for the Super Bowl, but the Philadelphia receiver who defied doctor's orders to play already guarantees he and the Eagles will be back.

Playing just 6 1/2 weeks after suffering a broken left leg and ankle, Owens caught nine passes for 122 yards for the Eagles here Sunday in their 24-21 loss to New England in the American football championship spectacle.

"I feel fine," Owens said. "I just feel bad we lost the game. We lost to a good team. Hey, we'll be back. We will. We will be back on this stage."

Eluding defenders for receptions of 36 and 30 yards, Owens served notice that he was able to be more than a decoy, making a major contribution to a passing attack that rolled up 357 yards.

"He played a heck of a game, played his heart out and made some nice receptions," Eagles coach Andy Reid said. "He took more snaps than I thought he would and had a great effort." Owens made 77 ctaches for 1,200 yards and 14 touchdowns in 12 games this season before his injury and defied the odds by starting against the Patriots.

"It didn't matter if I started. I knew I was going on the field, and I was going to be ready," Owens said. "I played as many plays as I could. Coach allowed me to get on the field and called my number. You don't get tired." The Eagles had lost each of the past three seasons in the playoffs just one triumph shy of reaching the Super Bowl. Making it to the big game this time was a breakthrough, and quarterback Donovan McNabb is confident it's not the last.

"We lost in the conference championship game. We came back," McNabb said. "We lost in the Super Bowl. We will be back. We came so close. I'm going to come out with my head high. I think it has been a wonderful year.

"I'll bet you everyone was on the edge of their seats. We could have won." The Patriots forced four turnovers, two of them McNabb interceptions in the fourth quarter. But even New England defenders had to respect Owens' effort.

"It's incredible for that guy to break his leg and come off that injury as early as he did," Patriots cornerback Asante Samuel said. "To perform the way he did is a credit to him. I have a great deal of respect for that man."

"T.O. played well," McNabb added. "He played really, really well." *AFP*

Mickelson wins FBR Open by 5

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz.—Despite shots that sailed into the desert and in the water, Phil Mickelson is a winner again, on a course that still feels like home.

Mickelson won the FBR Open by five strokes on Sunday, the largest margin of victory in his 24 PGA Tour triumphs.

Mickelson's adventures off the fairway were offset by brilliant shots that led to four birdies in a final round 3-under 68. He never led by fewer than three strokes on Sunday, then capped his round with a 26-foot birdie putt from the fringe on the 18th to the wild cheers of the friendly throng.

MICKELSON AFP

Mickelson finished at 17-under 267 on the Tournament Players Club course. Scott McCarron and South Korean-born Kevin Na tied for second at 272. *AP*

Sixers victory sparks early celebration

JACKSONVILLE, Florida—Allen Iverson scored 28 points to lead the 76ers to a 106-104 home win over the Los Angeles Clippers on Sunday, as the city of Philadelphia prepared for even bigger success in Super Bowl XXXIX.

With the Eagles facing the New England Patriots in the NFL title game later on Sunday, the 76ers provided a winning start to the day as fans got in the mood early chanting "Eagles, Eagles." Iverson made sure supporters would go home happy, the NBA's leading scorer taking control with the contest tied at 101-101, nailing a three-pointer and then sinking two free throws to seal the victory.

Kyle Korver potted 16 points and Andre Iguodala added 15 to the 76ers' cause.

In Minneapolis, Paul Pierce poured in 32 points to lead the Boston Celtics past the Timberwolves, 103-100, to ensure New England sports fans also enjoyed a winning start to Super Bowl Sunday.

Gary Payton had 22 points and Ricky Davis added 12 as the Celtics posted their third straight win.

League MVP Kevin Garnett and Michael Olowokandi each had 21 but could not keep the slumping Timberwolves from absorbing their fifth consecutive defeat.

In Toronto, Dallas got double figure efforts from seven players, led by a 30 point, 11 rebound performance from Dirk Nowitzki as the Mavericks thumped the Raptors, 122-113. *AP*

COMPLETE RESULTS: Dallas 122, Toronto 113; Philadelphia 106, LA Clippers 104; Boston 10, Minnesota 100; Houston 103, LA Lakers 102. *AP*

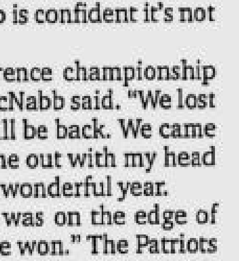
Barako manager named PFF vice president

PHILIPPINE Football Federation president Johnny Romualdez recently announced that Tony Chua, team manager of the Red Bull Barako basketball team and a former football player, has been appointed vice president of the PFF and chair of the 2005 Southeast Asian Games National Teams Committee (men and women).

In a meeting with godfathers selected by the First Gentleman Foundation, Jack Rodriguez for women's football and Pocholo Borromeo for men's football, Chua briefly discussed some of his plans for the national teams in preparation for the Southeast Asian Games.

Chua, 52 year-old executive of Photokina Marketing, will make sure the training program submitted by the coaches of the Southeast Asian Games teams is feasible and implementable.

Chua played for the Letran soccer team and then for the famed Lions team in the commercial leagues in the '80s. He became coach of the national women's team in 1987-88 and general secretary of the National Capital Region from 1986-to-1987.



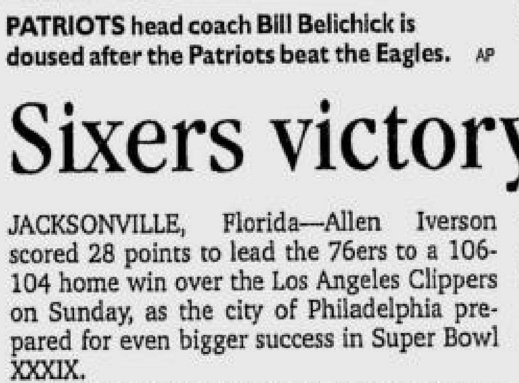
CHUA

Gaudio yanks crown away from Gonzalez

VINA DEL MAR, Chile—French Open champion Gaston Gaudio overcame a partisan crowd as he beat Chile's Fernando Gonzalez to win the BellSouth Open ATP tournament on Sunday.

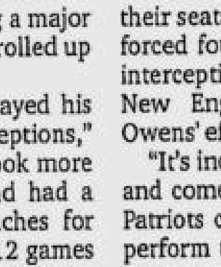
Gonzalez, Olympic gold medalist in the men's doubles last year and defending champion here, saved four match points in the final game before Gaudio won, 6-3, 6-4, in one hour 37 minutes to claim his first tournament since Roland Garros last June.

The Argentine clay court specialist, who kept his composure despite some often rowdy crowd behavior, broke in the eighth game as he took the first set in 44 minutes. *AP*



GAUDIO reacts after his final victory over Chile's Fernando Gonzalez. AP

Sharapova to miss Tokyo for a year



SHARAPOVA

TOKYO—Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova can't wait to be back in Tokyo, where she won her first professional title, first WTA titles and this weekend triumphed at the Pan Pacific Open.

But success has caught up with her and it will be at least one year before the skyrocketing Russian starlet is eligible to play again in her favorite city.

"I just seem to bring up my level when I play here, I don't know what it is, but I'm always determined," said Sharapova after winning the Pan Pacific Open by beating world number one Lindsay Davenport, 6-1, 3-6, 7-6 (7/5), Sunday.

"I've such great memories here. When I'm coming back, I feel inspired to win and fans are so amazing to me. They definitely raise my game as well.

"I remember winning my first title when I was 14 years old in Gunma, and here I won a Tier I on the professional tour, so without you (the fans), I wouldn't have been here. I can't wait to be back." *AFP*

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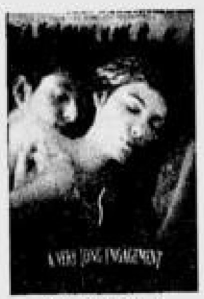
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2 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
3 SHALL WE DANCE
4 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
5 RACING STRIPES
6 WITHOUT A PADDLE
7 KUNG FU HUSTLE
8 OCEAN'S TWELVE
9 MEET THE FOCKERS
10 ELEKTRA
11 BLADE TRINITY
12 WHITE NOISE

sm city fairview
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2 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 OCEAN'S TWELVE
4 ELEKTRA
5 MEET THE FOCKERS
6 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
7 SHALL WE DANCE
8 RACING STRIPES
9 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
10 MAD HOUSE
11 BLADE TRINITY
12 KUNG FU HUSTLE

sm city north edsa
1 ELEKTRA
2 RACING STRIPES
3 WITHOUT A PADDLE
4 KUNG FU HUSTLE
5 SHALL WE DANCE
6 MEET THE FOCKERS
7 SHALL WE DANCE
8 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT

sm city manila
1 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
2 KUNG FU HUSTLE
3 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
4 SHALL WE DANCE
5 RACING STRIPES
6 ELEKTRA
7 WITHOUT A PADDLE
8 BLADE TRINITY
9 MEET THE FOCKERS
10 WHITE NOISE
11 LITTLE BLACK BOOK smcinemaexclusive
12 MAD HOUSE

sm city sta. mesa
1 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 ELEKTRA
4 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
6 RACING STRIPES
7 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
8 BLADE TRINITY
9 KUNG FU HUSTLE
10 WHITE NOISE

sm city southmall
1 SHALL WE DANCE
2 RACING STRIPES
3 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
4 SALSA smcinemaexclusive
5 BLADE TRINITY
6 OCEAN'S TWELVE
7 KUNG FU HUSTLE
8 ELEKTRA
9 MEET THE FOCKERS
10 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT

sm city bicutan
1 ELEKTRA
2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 MEET THE FOCKERS
4 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

sm cinema tutuban
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

sm supercenter sucat
1 ELEKTRA
2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
4 MEET THE FOCKERS

LUZON

sm city pampanga
1 ELEKTRA
2 BIRTH
3 KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 OUT OF REACH
5 HELLWOLF
6 MEET THE FOCKERS

sm city baguio
1 ELEKTRA
2 MEET THE FOCKERS
3 UNO
4 KUNG FU HUSTLE

sm city batangas
1 KUNG FU HUSTLE
2 BLADE TRINITY
3 ELEKTRA
4 WHITE NOISE

sm city dasmariñas
1 SHALL WE DANCE
2 ELEKTRA
3 MAD HOUSE
4 MEET THE FOCKERS

sm city marilao
1 ELEKTRA
2 MAD HOUSE
3 SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
4 BLADE TRINITY

sm city bacoor
1 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
2 RACING STRIPES
3 ELEKTRA
4 SHALL WE DANCE
5 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
6 MEET THE FOCKERS
7 WHITE NOISE
8 BLADE TRINITY

sm city lucena
1 KUNG FU HUSTLE
2 HELLWOLF
3 UNO
4 RAISE YOUR VOICE

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
1 ELEKTRA
2 KUNG FU HUSTLE
3 MEET THE FOCKERS
4 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
5 HAROLD AND KUMAR
6 OCEAN'S TWELVE
7 BLADE TRINITY
8 ELEKTRA

sm city iloilo
1 RAISE YOUR VOICE
2 RESERVED
3 WHITE NOISE
4 MAD HOUSE
5 KUNG FU HUSTLE
6 ELEKTRA
7 RESERVED
8 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON

sm city davao
1 ELEKTRA
2 SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
3 RAISE YOUR VOICE
4 HAROLD AND KUMAR
5 KUNG FU HUSTLE
6 WHITE NOISE

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2 HONEY
3 WHITE NOISE
4 ELEKTRA

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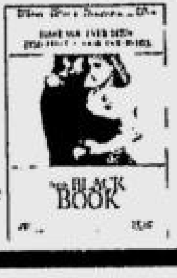

DAKOTA Fanning: "I learned so much just watching him."

Acting with Robert De Niro

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

SOME years ago, **Elisabeth Shue** jolted viewers and critics with her intensely dramatic performance in "Leaving Las Vegas." However, instead of following up on that riveting portrayal, she opted to drop out of sight, leaving only an appearance in "Hollow Man" to further whet viewers' expectations.

Only this year has Shue finally resurfaced, with a comeback performance in the dramatic thriller, "Hide and Seek," co-starring **Robert De Niro** and child sensation **Dakota Fanning**. What happened?

"I went back to college," Shue belatedly reveals. "I had some credits to take before I could get my degree, so I decided to do it while I still could. And I did: I graduated from Harvard with a diploma in political science."

What would an actress like her do with a degree in political science? "No, that's too utilitarian. When you act, you use all of your resources, and your education is part of your creative make-up and capital. It's not the political science aspect of it, it's bigger than that."

Why did she decide to make her comeback in "Hide and Seek," and not in any of the other projects that have been offered to her?

"I don't know, I've never been that calculating about anything I choose to do, to be honest. I just really love Robert De Niro, so when I learned that he was in the movie, I thought I'd gladly do anything and everything he was a part of. Also, I thought it was a really intelligent script and it was fun, so I decided to do it!"

What about the intimidation of working with De Niro? "I wasn't intimidated, I was in awe of him! The first day of shooting, everybody was sort of whispering. But he soon broke the ice, because he's such a warm human being. He's really very funny, he's got an incredible sense of humor!"

Did De Niro have the same effect on Dakota Fanning? The child star smiles, "He made me feel so comfortable! He was so kind to me and I learned so much from him, just by watching him act. He's so committed to the script, so focused—I loved it!"

"Hide and Seek" revolves around a widower (De Niro) who, after his wife's suicide, takes his daughter (Fanning) upstate. When the increasingly disturbed girl creates an imaginary friend, things take an unexpected and terrifying turn, and De Niro starts to worry about his child's gruesome habits.

ELISABETH Shue: "I just love him."

'1421' on Discovery Channel

DID THE Chinese discover America before Columbus did? Discovery Channel's new two-hour documentary, "1421: The Year China Discovered America?" seeks to answer that provocative question.

The landmark documentary is based on **Gavin Menzie's** book, and investigates Menzie's controversial theory that a daring Chinese admiral sailing the largest wooden armada ever built reached America 71 years before Columbus. Could **Zheng He's** intrepid fleet have shown European explorers the way to the West?

"1421" airs at 7 p.m. on Feb. 9, 11 a.m. on Feb. 10, and 9 a.m. on Feb. 13.

Chamber Music Recital

THE BELGIAN Embassy, in cooperation with the MCO Foundation and Equitable PCI Bank, presents a chamber music recital featuring Belgian musicians **Tom** (piano) and **John Moeyersoons** (oboe), at 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 14 at the San Francisco Santiago Hall of Equitable PCI Bank's Tower 1, Makati Avenue. Repertoire includes works by **Poulene, Schumann, Ravel** and **Ryelandt**. Call 878-4358.

Japanese posters

FROM Feb. 11 to 26, Philippine-Japan Festival 2005 presents an exhibit, "Discover Japan Through Contemporary Posters," at the fourth level of Shangri-La Plaza. The exhibit presents 75 posters not just as advertising materials but also as social art,

ACTING/ A27

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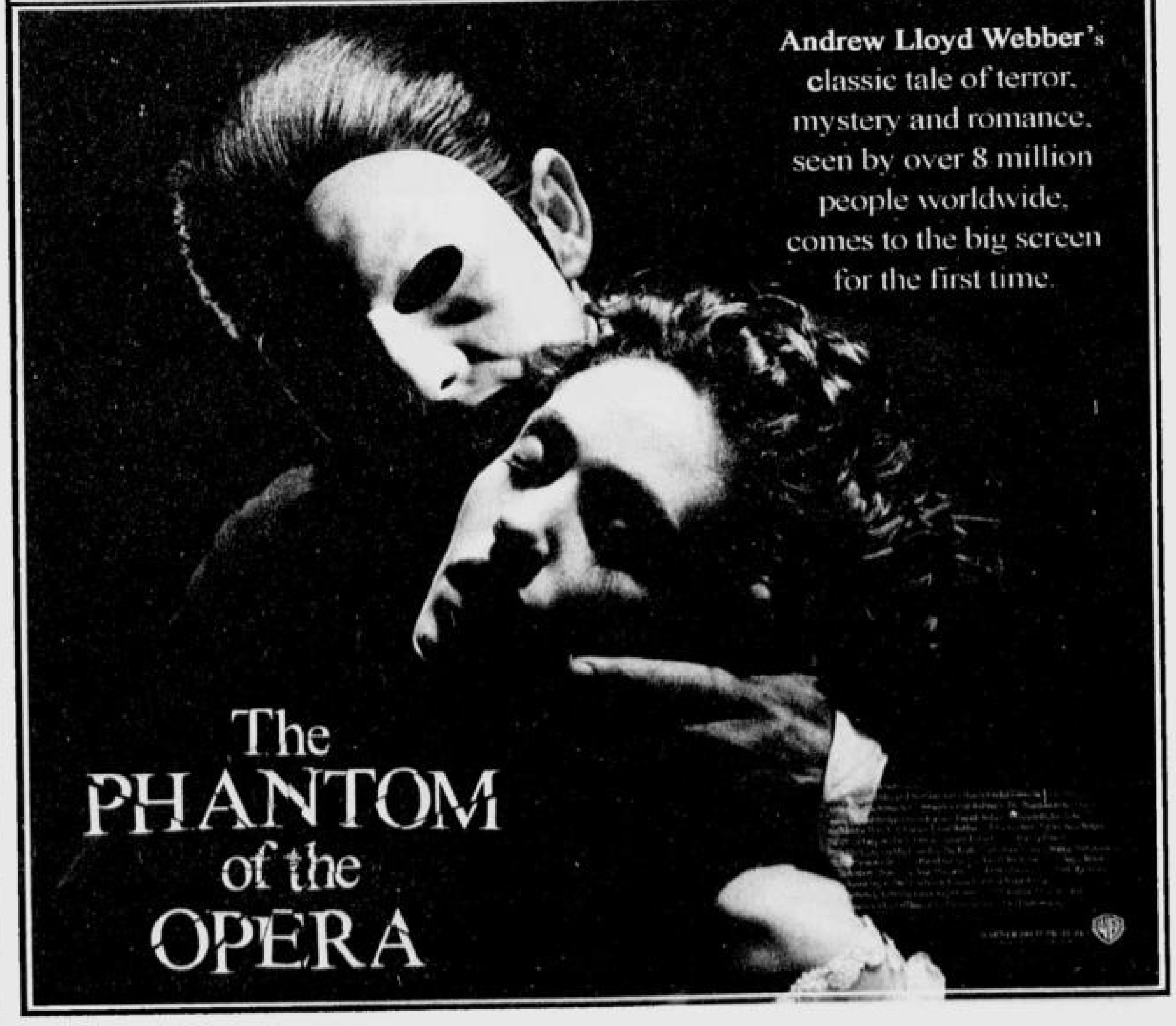

Acting with Robert De Niro

From page A26

and is presented by Japan Foundation and Shangri-La Plaza, with the support of the Embassy of Japan.

'R&B, The Collection'

MCA MUSIC'S "R&B, The Collection" is a compilation featuring chart toppers from Outkast ("Hey Ya!"), Eamon ("I Don't Want You Back"), **Britney Spears** ("Toxic"), Usher ("Pop Ya Collar"), The Black Eyed Peas ("Rock Your Body"), TLC ("Waterfalls"), Destiny's Child ("Say My Name"), **Wyclef Jean** (Gone Till November") and Blackstreet ("No Diggity"). The double-CD album has a total of 35 tracks.

'Before Sunset' on DVD and VCD

ETHAN Hawke and Julie Delphy's romantic starrer, "Before Sunset," is now on DVD and VCD. In the film, former lovers meet again in Paris, where they explore their hearts and minds and rediscover their powerful love for the unexpected, the unrehearsed, and each other.

The DVD's special features include a behind-the-scenes featurette and theatrical thriller. Film blurbs: **Richard Roeper** (Ebert & Roeper), "Really topnotch work." **Michael Wilmington** (Chicago Tribune), "A film of Luminous delights."

More than a love story

From page A28

awards, such as Best Male TV Host and Best Male Comedy Actor for Star Awards, and Most Outstanding Male TV Host from Empress Awards. This year, Ogie embarks on a new career as concert producer. His first venture? What else but his two-night Valentine Concert?

Entitled "PWR F LUV," the show promises to be a night full of love and romance. It will be studded with 1980s songs especially arranged to suit the mood for love. Ogie will also sing songs by **Manilow** and **Kenny Rankin**, as well as selections from his new album, "I am a Singer," notably his current hit, "Tanging Pag-ibig" (now a top 10 hit on OPM Myx and FM stations all over the country).

Joining Ogie in this special event are guests **Rachelle Ann Go, Iya Villania** and **Kyla.** "PWR F LUV" is set on Feb. 13 and 14 at the Music Museum. Show time is 8 p.m. Musical direction is by **Archie Castillo**, stage direction by **GB Sampedro**. Tickets are available at Ticketworld (8915610 or 8919999) and Music Museum (721-6726).

(For feedback, e-mail wateringhole-shangrila@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com)

Seeemall!

AYALA CINEMAS THX

Movies/schedules may change without prior notice. For verification call 729-7777

ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU
THX 1 SHALL WE DANCE	1 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13	1 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 1 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT 12 25, 3 10, 5 55, 8 40, 11 25	1 ITS ALL ABOUT LOVE
2 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13	2 ELEKTRA	2 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 SHALL WE DANCE 2 15, 4 30, 6.45, 9 00, 11 15	2 HAROLD & KUMAR
3 ELEKTRA	3 SHALL WE DANCE	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 ELEKTRA 1 10, 3 30, 5:50, 8:10, 10 30	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 MEET THE FOCKERS 1 30, 4 00, 6:30, 9 00, 11 30	3 ELEKTRA
4 RACING STRIPES	4 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT	4 WITHOUT A PADDLE	GUARANTEED SEATS 4 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13 2 35, 4 45, 6.55, 9 05, 11 15	4 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT		5 RACING STRIPES	GUARANTEED SEATS 5 ELEKTRA 2 10, 4 30, 6:50, 9 10, 11 30	5
		6 SHALL WE DANCE		
		7 MEET THE FOCKERS		

GB1 GREENBELT 1
1 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT 1:20, 4 05, 6.50,9 35
2 SHALL WE DANCE 12.45, 3.00, 5.15, 7:30, 9 45

At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU
Photoworld Exhibit February 3-8, 2005	Valentines' Serenade at Food Establishments February 12-14,2005	A Book Bug's A Bunch of Treat for Heart February 11, 2005

ENTERTAINMENT LIVE!

GREENBELT 3 PARK	GREENBELT 3 LOBBY
Valentine Show featuring Bituin Escalante February 12. 2004	Vera Wang Gown Exhibit February 17-28, 2005

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Stargazing
Meet & greet the stars of Let The Love Begin on Feb. 11 in Market! Market! activity center (4:00 pm) & Glorietta activity center (6:00 pm). Have your picture taken w/ the casts for FREE & win exciting prizes.
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*Promo period: Feb. 9 to 15, 2005
Per DTI NCR Permit No. AI - 123. Series of 2005.

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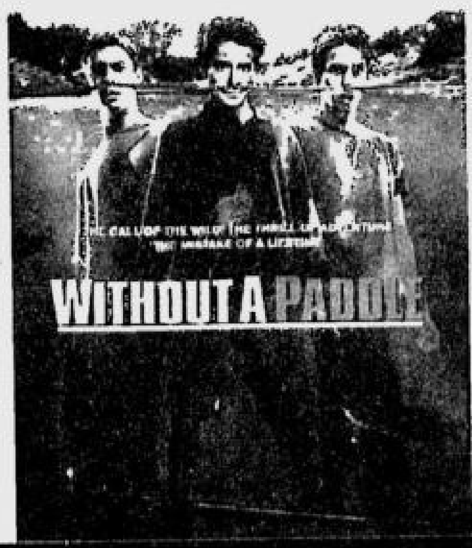

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4. Winner will be notified through registered mail and a phone call
5. The prize can be claimed at the Ayala Cinemas office, 5th flr Glorietta 4, Ayala Center Makati. Winner must present a valid ID and the notice received thru registered mail
6. Prizes not claimed within 60 days from the receipt of the notification shall be forfeited with prior approval of DTI
7. All employees of Ayala Cinemas and its subsidiaries including their relatives up to the second degree in consanguinity affinity are disqualified from joining the promo
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GALLERIA 632-8115/16

1 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT • THX
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00
2 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
3 RACING STRIPES
10:50 1:05 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00
4 WITHOUT A PADDLE
10:50 1:05 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00
5 ELEKTRA
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
6 SHALL WE DANCE
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
7 BLADE TRINITY
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
8 BATH HOUSE
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
9 MEET THE FOCKERS
1:05 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00
10 WHITE NOISE
12:20 2:40 5:00 7:20 9:40

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 SHALL WE DANCE
10:35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50
2 RACING STRIPES
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
3 ELEKTRA
10.35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50
4 RESERVE
5 MEET THE FOCKERS
10:20 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
6 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
10:35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50
7 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
10:30 1:20 4:10 7:00 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
2 ELEKTRA
11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00
3 KUNG FU HUSTLE
10:50 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
4 MEET THE FOCKERS
11:20 1:40 4:00 6:30 9:00
5 SHALL WE DANCE
12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00 10:30
6 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
10:30 1:00 3:30 6:00 8:20 10:30
7 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00 10:30
8 RACING STRIPES
10:50 1:10 3:30 5:50 8:10 10:30

NOVALICHES 935-3220/31

1 ELEKTRA
10:40 1:05 3:30 5:55 8:25
2 RACING STRIPES
11:40 1:55 4:05 6:15 8:25
3 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
10:30 1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30
4 BLADE TRINITY
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 8:50
5 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55
6 SHALL WE DANCE
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55
7 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
10:40 1:05 3:30 5:55 8:25
8 OCEAN'S TWELVE
12:30 3:00

PIONEER 687-5378

1 SHALL WE DANCE
2 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
3 RACING STRIPES
4 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 UNO
2 RESIDENT EVIL 2
3 NED KELLY
4 SYLVIA

CAINTA 240-4661

1 ELEKTRA
2 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
3 RACING STRIPES
4 SHALL WE DANCE

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STA. ROSA (049) 837-0907

1 MEET THE FOCKERS
2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
4 MADHOUSE
5 ELEKTRA

LIPA (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 BLADE TRINITY
2 ELEKTRA
3 IN SEARCH OF AN IMPOTENT MAN
4 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON
5 WHITE NOISE

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 ELEKTRA
2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 BLADE TRINITY
4 MADHOUSE
5 MEET THE FOCKERS

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 ELEKTRA
2 THE TOOL BOX MURDER
3 HAUNTED SPIRITS 2
4 MEET THE FOCKERS

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 ELEKTRA
2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 RACING STRIPES
4 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
6 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270

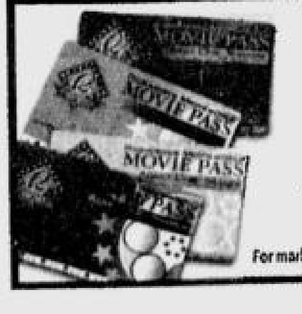
1 BIRTH
2 2046
3 SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
4 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 HELLWOLF
6 ELEKTRA

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0450

1 KUNG FU HUSTLE
2 NED KELLY
3 ELEKTRA
4 WHITE NOISE
5 SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
6 UNO

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 ELEKTRA
2 WHITE NOISE
3 RAISE YOUR VOICE
4 KUNG FU HUSTLE
5 MADHOUSE
6 2046



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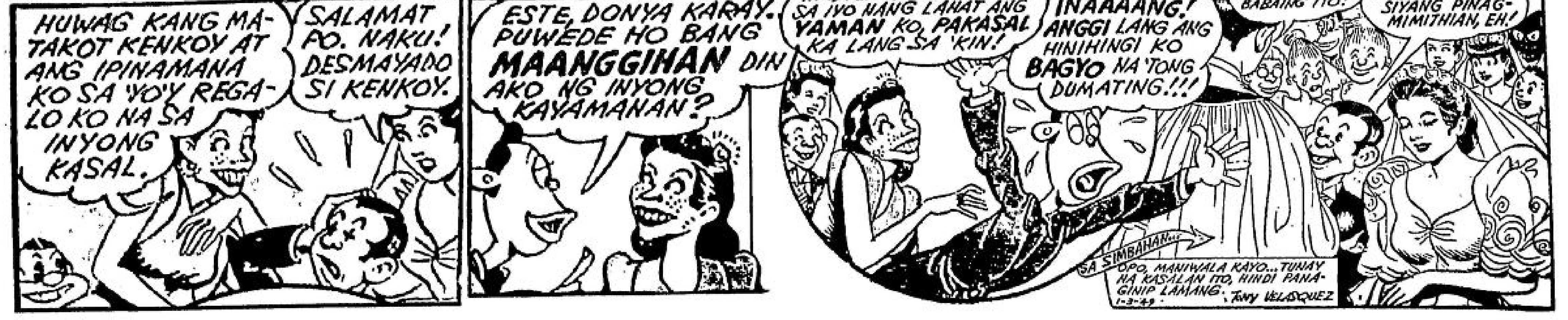
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ESTE, DONYA KARAY. PUWEDE HO BANG MAANGGIHAN DIN AKO NG INYONG KAYAMANAN?
HINDI LANG PAANGGI! SA IYO NANG LAHAT ANG YAMAN KO, PAKASAL KA LANG SA 'KIN!
INAAANG! INAAAANG! ANGGI LANG ANG HINIHINGI KO BAGYO NA 'TONG DUMATING!!!
IKAW KENKOY.. TINATANGGAP MO BANG MAGING ESPOSA ANG BABAING ITO?
ABA, OPO!.. DALAWAMPUNG TAON KO NA PO SIYANG PINAGMIMITHIAN, EH!
SA SIMBAHAN...
OPO, MANIWALA KAYO... TUNAY NA KASALAN ITO, HINDI PANAGINIP LAMANG.
1-3-49
TONY VELASQUEZ

More than a love story

KALEIDOSCOPIC cinematography: Audrey Tautou in "A Very Long Engagement"

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

SINCE I've always adored the French language and I am continually trying to perfect my command of it, watching French films is always pure rapture for me.

Jean-Pierre Jeunet's "A Very Long Engagement (Un Long Dimanche de Francailles)" transported me to an enchanting realm of pop-up book complexity. The images in the French movie virtually jump out off the screen in an amazing way. It's the story—rich and structured like a novel (It is in fact adapted from a popular French novel by **Sebastien Japrisot**).

The film reunites the engaging star of "Amelie" (**Audrey Tautou**) with its director Jeunet. Tautou, whose button eyes and pouty lips seem made for the silent-screen era, portrays Mathilde, an incurable romantic who walks with a limp (from polio) and waits for her fiance to return from the front. But then she is informed that Manech (**Gaspard Ulliel**) is dead —one of five soldiers court-martialed for self-inflicting wounds that they believed were going to excuse them from combat. Instead, their commanding officer has sent them into the no-man's land between the German and French lines, where they must certainly have been killed. Mathilde, however, believes otherwise. She would feel it in her heart if Manech had died. And so she embarks on a relentless search for the truth augmented with flashbacks and letter-writings, postcards and telegrams full of eccentric sub-plots.

Jodie Foster makes a brief but piercing appearance in the movie. She plays a woman who agrees to have the baby of her sterile husband's best friend in order to keep her spouse out of the war. Tautou's fleeting encounter with Foster is filled with quiet intensity.

Hyperbole

"A Very Long Engagement" is more than a love story. It is also a hyperbole of the grotesqueness of war and the worst that is in the human heart. People are blown into bits, beheaded, and murdered in such extreme macabre fashion that the scenes are almost comical ... a lustful platoon commander ogles pictures of naked women and relaxes in a tub away from the enemy lines while his men die in the trenches, and hides an important pardon document from the president that could have saved five condemned men from death . . . a whore blindly, and in cold blood, avenges the death of her man.

At the same time, the film is about the genuine tenderness and humanity that also exists within that dark arena—the kindness of the French cook in the trenches, the Corsican's last wish to die as a man before he was gunned down by the Germans between enemy lines, the likableness of the French spy Pire, Mathilde's undying love, and her aunt and uncle's simple devotion.

At some point you might say that the movie should have been called "A Very Long Movie" instead. Be that as it may, the film's redeeming factors are plenty. The awesome kaleidoscopic cinematography alone is enough to keep you enthralled. And in spite of the too many characters, Mathilde and Manech are too endearing to ignore. They reaffirm every lover's creed that *l'amour* is always worth the long wait.

Ogie, the producer

POP STAR Ogie Alcasid looks back on the year 2004 with fondness. The singer's winning streak continued with successful shows, concerts, and records here and abroad. He also continued to win

MORE/A27

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'Matrix' Laurence Fishburne is brilliantly ruthless." -MAXIM MAGAZINE
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LAURENCE FISHBURNE
ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

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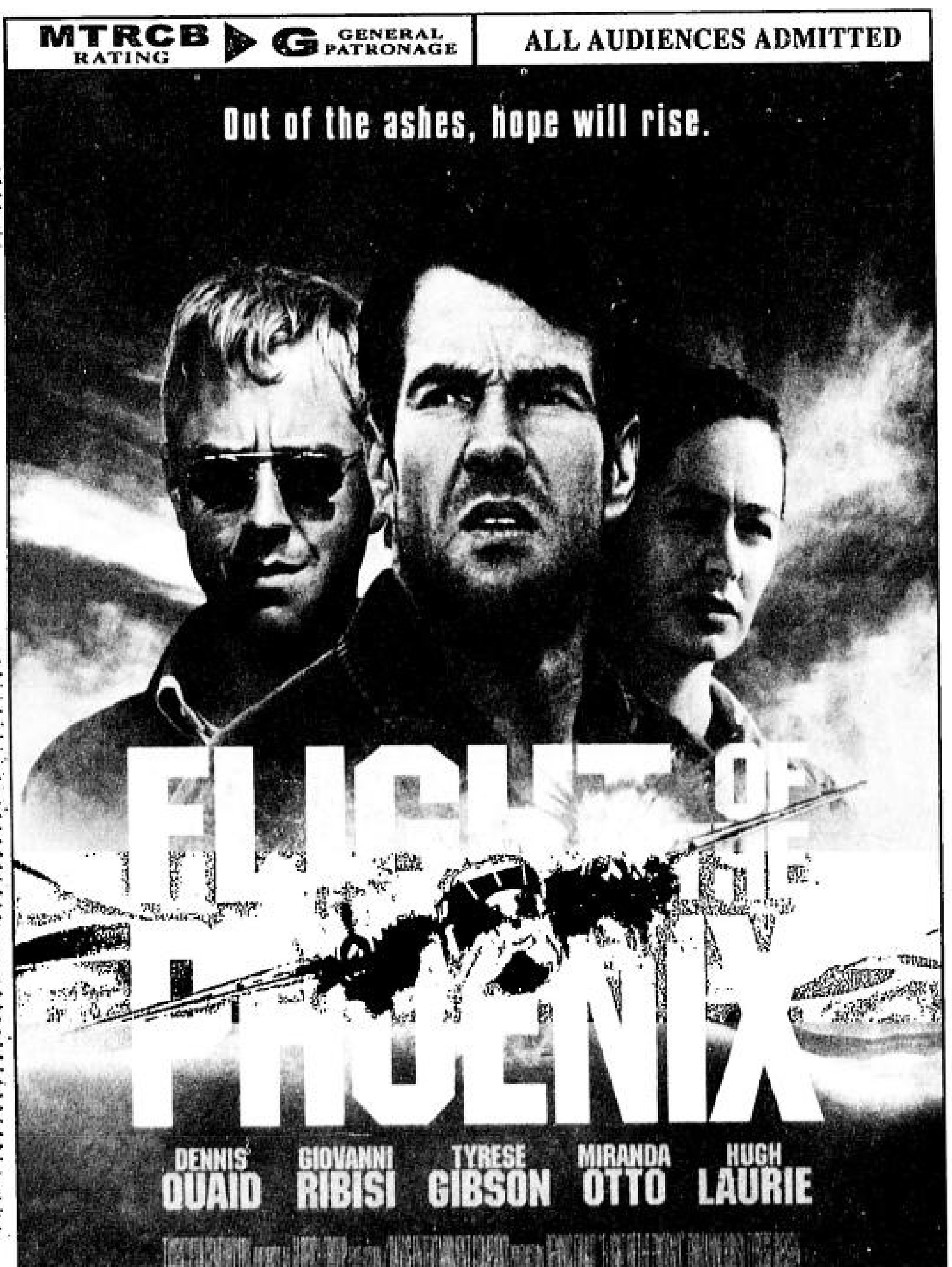
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Kissing parties

SHOW TIME

POSSIBLY the biggest gathering of the country's best musical performers happens on Feb. 12 in not one but four venues —Baywalk, Angeles, Cebu and Davao—via Close-Up's Valentine event, "Lovapalooza 2."

Manileños can come to the Roxas Boulevard Baywalk, kiss and groove to performances by Bamboo, Anna Fegi, Christian Bautista, Dingdong Avanzado, Freestyle, Jenine Desiderio, Jessa Zaragosa, Kyla, Luke Mijares, the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philippine Symphonic Band, Silk, Soul Glass and the Episode band, Acoustic Jive and Ateneo's Rio Bosa. Drew Arellano, Iya Villania, John Pratts, Bianca King and Luis Manzano are the evening's hosts.

The Balibago, Mac Arthur Highway in Angeles, Pampanga, will sizzle with the musical stylings of Rivermaya, Nina, Aliya Parcs, Jimmy Bondoc, Karel Marquez, Thor with Soul Aveñue, U-Turn and 7 Shots of Wisdom. Hosts will be Aliya Parcs with Marc San Diego, Karel Marquez, Raymond Gutierrez and Danica Sotto.

The streets of Cebu in the Cebu Business Park will be crammed to the gills with party people as Jay-R, Keith Martin, Arnee Hidalgo, Catski Band, Dice and K-9, Entwined Band, Geneva Cruz, Jeffrey Hidalgo, Jimmy Muna, Krook and Jojo, Mixed Stream Band, Stage Crew, and U Lily drop the beats. Hosts are Paolo Trillo, Cheska Garcia and Doug Kramer.

Down south, Matina Town Square in Davao is set to swing with the music of Paolo Santos, Parokya ni Edgar, Pido, Cynthia Alexander, Cookie Chua with Mike Villegas, Albert de Pano, Gary Granada, Hourglass, Joey Ayala, Noel Cabangon, Parliament Syndicate band, Ria M. and Paolo, and Ryan Regino. Rafael Russel, Wanwan Reyes, Marco Alcaraz and Angelica Panganiban will be the hosts.

"My Heart's Love"

Award-winning songstress Ivy Violan stars in "My Heart's Love," a special Valentine concert on Feb. 14, 7 p.m., at the Peninsula Hotel Rigodon Ballroom.

Ivy will sing hits from her albums "Hanggang Ngayon," "Ivy at the Movies" and "Ivy Violan IV." The show reunites her with Rico J. Puno and musical director Homer Flores. Another guest is rising singing star George Sison Tagle.

For tickets, call 776-9359, 823-2974, or (0917) 901-1333.

Busybody at Onstage

Javk Popplewell's "Busybody" runs at Onstage in Greenbelt 1 from Feb. 11 to 27. Directed by Michael Williams, the play stars Joy Virata, Miguel Faustmann, Jeremey Domingo, Liesl Batucan, Ana Bitong, Arnel Carrion, Niccolo Manahan and Pheona Baranda.

Evening performances at 8 p.m. every Friday and Saturday with 3:30 p.m. matinees every Saturday and Sunday. For details, call 887-0710 or e-mail rep@broline.com.

Afternoon "kilig"

Richard Gutierrez, Angel Locsin, Mark Herras and Jennelyn Mercado will be at the 4th level Tradehall of Metropolis Star in Alabang on Feb. 12 to promote their Valentine movie, "Let the Love Begin." The quartet will perform in a mini-concert and then sign autographs and pose for snapshots with their fans.

Dating game

Watch one young man and one woman meet in a Valentine dating game on Feb. 14 at the 2nd level Food Court activity area of Starmall EDSA. They will spend a romantic evening with dinner and dancing at the Cuba Libre Latin Bar and Resto.

Also at the Starmall, Night of the Champions winner Erik Santos will serenade his fans at the 2nd level activity hub of Starmall Las Piñas on Feb. 13, 4 p.m., and at the 2nd level Tradehall of Starmall EDSA on Feb. 19 at 3 p.m.

For event details, call 872-5249, 850-3845 or 724-4992.

Romance at Robinsons

On Feb. 13 at 4 p.m., watch Brad Turvey and Chynna Ortaleza at Robinsons Galleria, James Blanco and Angelene Aguilar at Robinsons Place Manila, Marco Alcaraz and Sheena Halili at Robinsons Metro East, Paolo Paraiso and Katrina Halili at Robinsons Pace Pioneer, Alvin Aragon and Maoui David at Robinsons Place Cainta, Theo Bernardos and Aiza Marquez at Robinsons Place Imus, Russel C. Mon and Michelle Arciaga at Robinsons Place Dasmariñas, Maeky Lopez and Champagne Morales at Robinsons Place Angeles, Sherwin Ordoñez and Denise Laurel at Robinsons Starmills Pampanga, AJ Dee and Christine Reyes at Robinsons Place Sta. Rosa, and Chubi del Rosario and Katarina Perez at Robinsons Place Lipa.

The bestseller as film material

From page A30

had in fact trained as a soldier in said camp and lived in the barracks.

But how do to transport the prisoners, most of whom were sick, if not altogether rendered invalid by hunger and torture?

Since not enough vehicles were available, Pajota suggested carabao carts and Mucci found the suggestion almost absurd. But he also realized it was the only feasible scenario.

The raid was over in less than 30 minutes.

Wealth of details

What makes the book a thoroughly absorbing read is the wealth of details on the background and ordeals of survivors of the Bataan Death March and how they survived three years in concentration camps

The matter of saving the remaining 500 prisoners in Cabanatuan became urgent and critical with the discovery of mass slaughter of American soldiers in another Japanese camp—in Puerto Princesa, Palawan—a few weeks before the Nueva Ecija raid.

Wrote Lapham in his memoirs included in the book: "The plight of the prisoners in Cabanatuan had been on my mind for many months. We feared that once the Japanese thought the invasion was imminent, they would kill all the prisoners."

There are other tales of heroism mentioned, among them about priests and couriers involved in keeping the prisoners alive and keeping the communication lines open while waiting for the return of General Douglas MacArthur.

There is also the side story of an American Mata Hari named Claire Phillips, who owned an exclusive night spot called the Tsubaki Club used for spying on Japanese officers and soldiers. Phillips raised money and medicine for prisoners of the Cabanatuan concentration camp.

On the whole, "Ghost Soldiers" is such a well-written book, such a great read, that we have every right to wonder if "The Great Raid" would live up to it.

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ENTERTAINMENT

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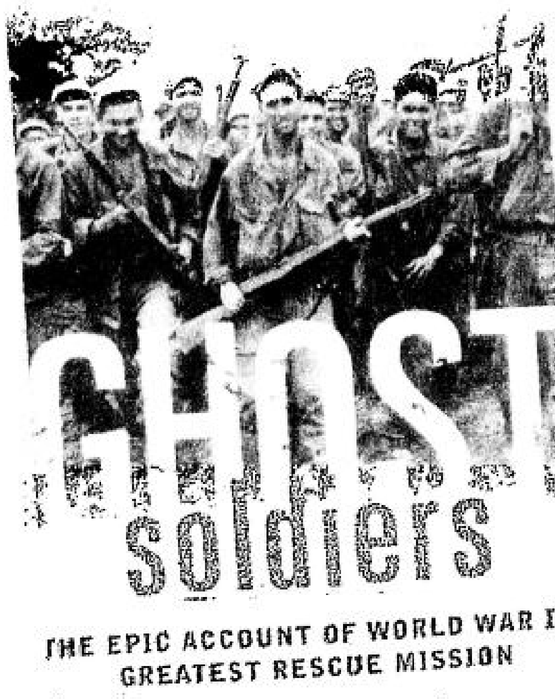
The bestseller as film material


NATIONAL BESTSELLER
GHOST
soldiers
THE EPIC ACCOUNT OF WORLD WAR II'S GREATEST RESCUE MISSION
"Riveting and patriotically stirring." —The New York Times

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

JOHN Dahl's "The Great Raid" which stars Benjamin Bratt, Joseph Fiennes, James Franco and our very own Cesar Montano is based on the best-selling book "Ghost Soldiers," by American novelist Hampton Sides.

The setting is a concentration camp in Barangay Pangatian in Cabanatuan City in Nueva Ecija. The story is of a daring rescue of some 516 prisoners of war (mostly Americans) led by Lieutenant Colonel Henry Mucci (played by Bratt) and Robert Prince (Franco) as assault commander.

Two Filipinos figure in the historic rescue: the late Nueva Ecija Gov. Eduardo Joson (then captain and leader of Squadron 213 of the guerilla fighters) and Captain Juan Pajota (Montano), who helped carry out the mission.

On Jan. 30, the province observed the 60th anniversary of that rescue with US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone and Sides in attendance.

"Just as we stood together here 60 years ago," said Ricciardone, "today we stand together to protect freedom. Our partnership runs deep, based on shared values and the blood shed in that battlefield."

In Nueva Ecija alone, a recorded 2,566 Filipino and American soldiers perished in the war.

Gov. Tomas Joson III, son of the late Capt. Joson, said he learned about the historic rescue only through Sides' book.

Riveting, patriotic

The New York Times described the book as "riveting and patriotically stirring." The Wall Street Journal said it was a "great war story." David Halberstam (author of "Playing for Keeps" and "The Best and the Brightest") noted that the Cabanatuan story was "told with skill and intelligence," and concluded that "Ghost Soldiers" belonged in the same shelf as General Hal Moore's and Joe Galloway's "We Were Soldiers Once … And Young" and Mark Bowden's "Black Hawk Down."

HAMPTON Sides and Cesar Montano

> 'Ghost Soldiers' by Hampton Sides is such a great read, you wonder if its movie version, 'The Great Raid,' would live up to it

Kirkus Reviews called "Ghost Soldiers" an "extraordinary tale of bravery under fire and the will to endure."

Certainly, it was a well-planned operation staged by rangers trained for the most dangerous assignments. It was a big success largely because of the big role played by two Filipino guerilla leaders, the late Capt. Joson and Pajota, who was then a sergeant.

At the time of the raid, Capt. Joson—who would become provincial governor after the Liberation—was in his mid-30s. He was described in the book as a "natural politician with a knack for gentle persuasion" and "a broad smile full of good teeth."

Pajota, on the other hand, is "stern-looking man of thirty years" who wore an old khaki uniform of the US Army of the Far East (Usaffe).

Robert Lapham, the American guerilla leader, recalled that Pajota was quiet and sincere, but had a tough streak. "He was a very unflamboyant guy with a natural bent for leadership," Sides quoted Lapham as saying. "He was resourceful, organized, and extremely imaginative. He was from Nueva Ecija and knew it like a book."

Getaway by carabaos

When Pajota learned of the impending raid of the Pangatian camp in Cabanatuan, he advised Mucci to postpone it for at least 24 hours. Pajota suggested that, before the actual raid, an American fighter plane should buzz the camp—but not shoot—just to divert the attention of the Japanese guards. The camp lies on a flat open terrain and the rescuers had no way of of hiding right before the actual attack.

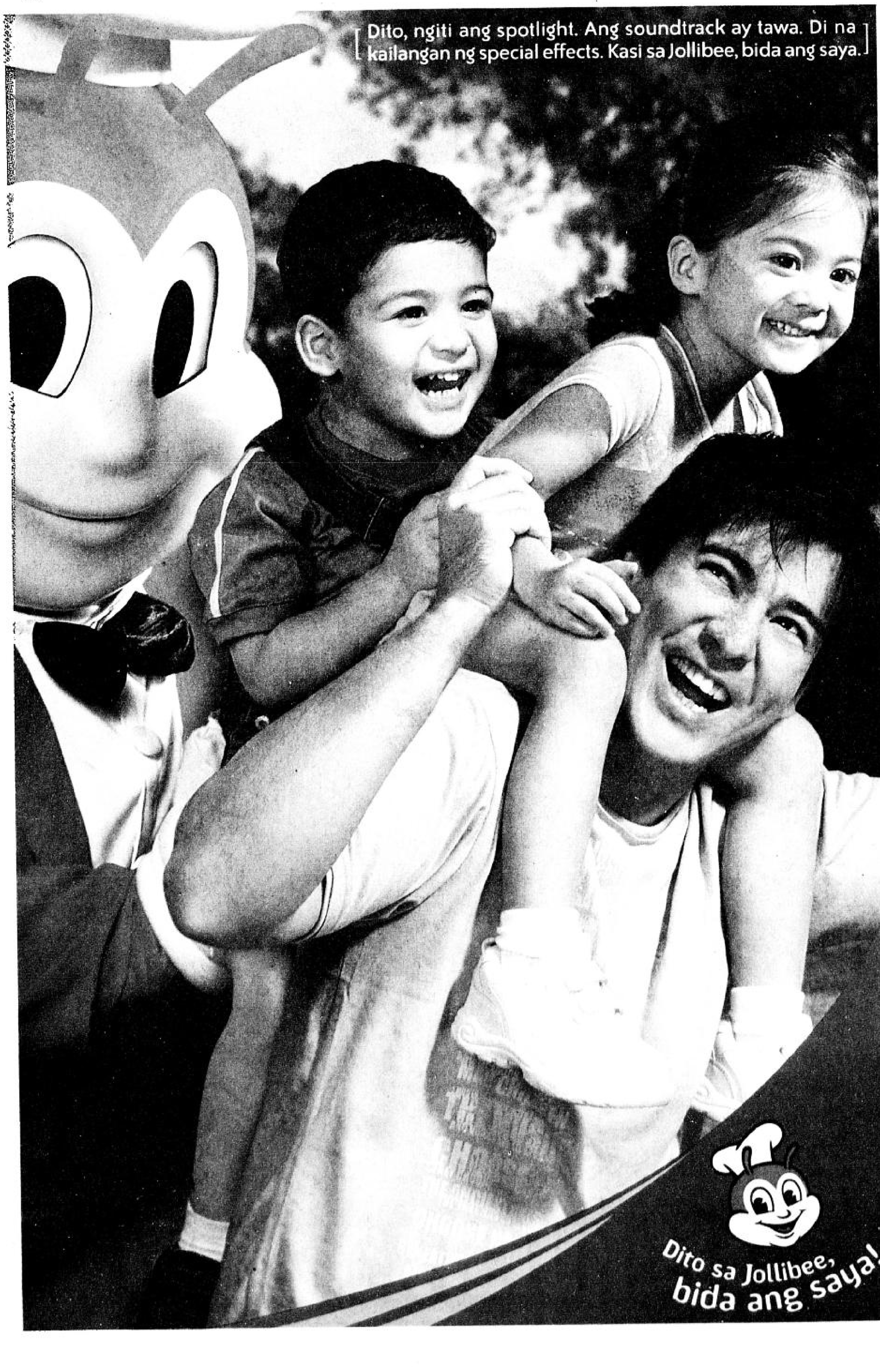
Formerly attached to the 91st Filipino Infantry, Pajota had been cut off from Filipino-American forces during the retreat to Bataan but had perfected his skills as a saboteur and hit-and-run artist. The Japanese could not keep up with him. Teaming up with Lapham, he conducted countless sorties and ambushes and organized a guerilla force of 300 well-trained men answerable only to him.

Thus Pajota was perfect for the ambitious raid. According to the book, Pajota

THE BESTSELLER/ A29

CAPT. Robert Prince, assault commander

LT. COL. Henry Mucci, battalion commander


Dito, ngiti ang spotlight. Ang soundtrack ay tawa. Di na kailangan ng special effects. Kasi sa Jollibee, bida ang saya.
Dito sa Jollibee, bida ang saya!

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BIR, Customs exceed January targets

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAUS of Internal Revenue and of Customs exceeded their tax collection goals in January, giving a positive momentum for the government to achieve a better fiscal position this year.

Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. said preliminary figures showed that the revenue agency had surpassed by a slight margin its P40.8-billion target for the month. The official figure, which will be released next week, can still increase upon completion of the BIR's computation.

Initial calculations showed that the BIR has already collected P41 billion, said Revenue Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares. The amount is so far the highest collection for the usually slow month of January in the BIR's history.

She said ongoing efforts to improve revenue collection, such as improvements in the auditing system and the "tax mapping," contributed to a higher-than-target collection for January.

Tax mapping is the program under which the BIR sends revenue personnel to the field to check on the tax compliance of commercial establishments, such as those located in malls and business districts.

The BIR, which accounts for more than 60 percent of the national government's total revenues, is tasked to collect P456.4 billion this year, or 16 percent higher than the P470 billion it collected in 2004.

The government is banking largely on the BIR and the Customs to raise more revenues to help achieve its medium-term goal of wiping out the budget deficit, which last year stood at P186.1 billion.

For the BOC's part, Customs Commissioner George Jereos reported that his office also surpassed its collection target by P308 million. The BOC's statistics department said its duty collections for the month reached P10.69 billion as against the target of P10.383 billion.

The BOC was earlier tasked to collect P146.64 billion for 2005, but the Department of Finance, its head agency, is expected to raise the figure to more than P150 billion. The government wants to raise the BOC's revenue target considering that it found no difficulty meeting its target last year.

For the whole of 2004, the BOC, the second biggest revenue contributor to the government among all agencies, collected P122 billion. This was P10 billion more than its target of P112 billion. The BOC attributed its collection performance last year to several factors, such as its computerization efforts and the depreciation of the peso. (Strengthening of the dollar against the peso makes the BOC collect higher amounts of import duties).

The BOC said it has also strengthened its anti-smuggling drive.

The BOC said in a statement that it has seized multimillion-peso worth of smuggled items.

Customs Deputy Commissioner Reynaldo Nicolas reported that the bureau was able to detect P15 million worth of cellular phones shipped to the Manila International Container Port from Singapore and consigned to Libra Trad-

BIR/ B2

Peso hits 19-month high of 54.52:$1

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO yesterday hit a 19-month high of 54.52 against the US dollar before closing at 55.57, its further ascent tempered only by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' dollar purchases.

Foreign exchange traders said the BSP, in a bid to temper the sharp appreciation of the local currency, had been scooping up the greenback at the spot foreign exchange market.

"They (BSP traders) are the only ones buying in the market," one trader said. "The BSP is trying its best to smoothen the depreciation."

The closing of 54.57 to the dollar yesterday represented a gain of 11 centavos from Friday's 54.68. It was also the local currency's stronger finish since Oct. 13, 2003.

Some $364.5 million changed hands at the Philippine Dealing System.

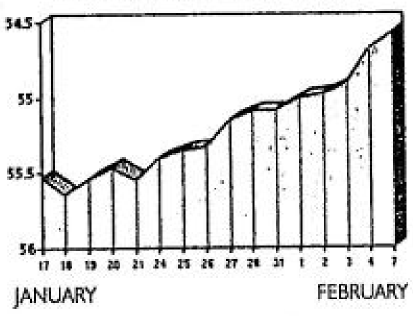
The peso opened at 54.62 and hit an intra-day low of 54.65 before sustaining its rally.

Other traders said liquidity in the market was further boosted by some $58 million in offshore portfolio inflow which came in last Friday for the stock rights offering of coal mining firm Semirara Mining Corp.

PESO/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



P 54.57= $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 7, 2005

¥ 104.30= $ 1

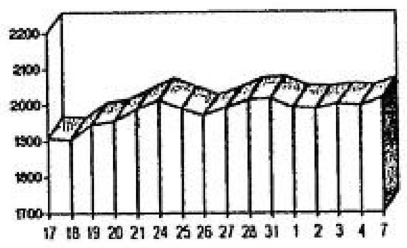
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 7, 2005

GOLD: $ 414.30-414.80

per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 7, 2005

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares climb 1.07%

SHARE prices closed 1.07 percent higher yesterday on aggressive buying in blue chips expected to report strong 2004 profits, dealers said.

They said there was profit-taking in mining stocks which have gained in past weeks on the back of fresh investment commitments from foreign investors, despite continued optimism over future prospects for the industry.

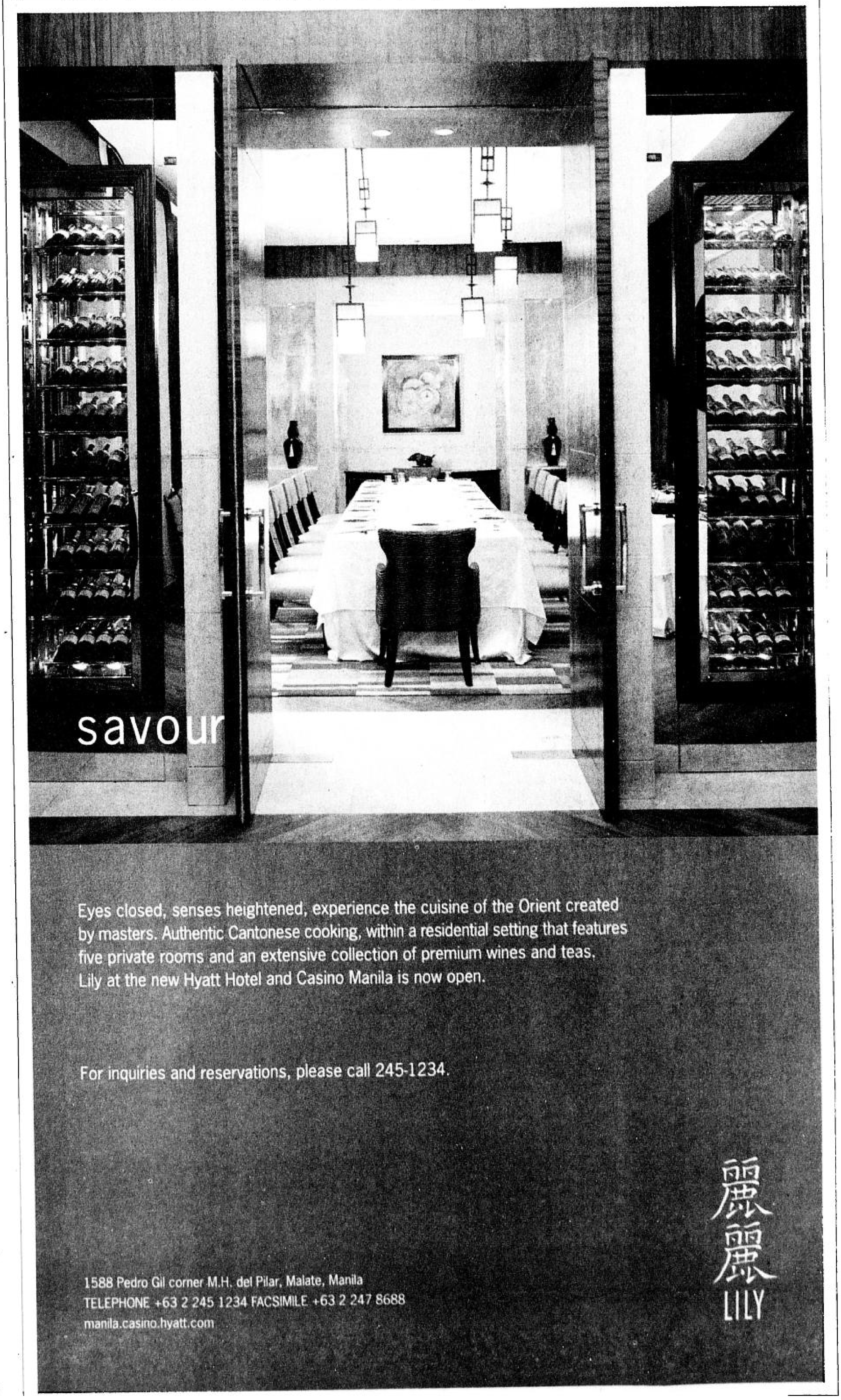
The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 21.27 points to 2,016.84. It traded between 1,995.57 and 2,018.62.

Volume reached 2.87 billion shares worth P2.07 billion from 2.55 billion shares worth P4.89 billion on Friday.

The broader all-shares index gained 3.48 points to 1,177.15.

Losers led gainers 51 to 41, with 48 stocks unchanged.

"There's continued optimism on the Philippine economy, particularly on the potential multiplier effect of increased investments in the mining sector," Mark Alan Canizares of Citiseconline.com, said. *AFP, AP*



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麗麗
LILY

Globe seen to incur ₱5B in losses

But new standards shift won't hit telco's bottomline, execs say

By Clarissa S. Batino

GLOBE Telecom Inc. has said that losses related to this year's adoption of new international accounting standards, including adjustments pertaining to foreign exchange, would reach about P5 billion.

Globe's chief financial officer Delfin Gonzalez stressed that the entire amount would be charged to retained earnings, and thus, should not affect the company's profitability.

Of the estimated P5 billion the second-rank phone giant would incur due to new global standards of accounting, P2.5 billion are related to foreign exchange, according to the finance executive.

The rest, said Gonzalez, pertained to other items. Among these are accounting of financial instruments including derivatives, investment property, share-based payments, non-current assets held for sale, inventory, property-plant-and-equipment, related party disclosures, investments in associates and interests and joint ventures, among others.

"The P5 billion which we would charge to retained earnings is P&L (Profit-and-Loss Statement) neutral," assured the company's finance executive. "This would not affect our bottomline."

Of the new accounting benchmarks, the two items on foreign exchange are considered the most important as it would require companies to be more transparent in their dollar transactions.

The new standard requires companies to book any foreign exchange losses on transaction on the year these were incurred and not later. It also required that outstanding losses on foreign exchange transactions be made transparent.

Globe has $160 million of debts maturing in 2005 and $168 million in 2006. The company said it has enough internal funds to settle its debts even as 2004 profit growth of 9.7 percent was the slowest in 6 years.

The joint venture of Ayala Corp. and Singapore Telecommunications Ltd. netted P11.3 billion in 2004 against P10.3 billion in 2003. But the company assured it had enough free cash to keep on expanding the network and to give its shareholders a huge return.

Globe is spending P17 billion mostly for network roll-out this year. It had also set aside P8 billion to buy back a share for every 15 shares held by its owners.

The bulk, 80 percent of Globe's debts, is foreign denominated. But swap and forward contracts have effectively reduced Globe's foreign debts to about 55 percent.

The company said long-term debt dropped to P52 billion last year from P56 billion in 2003. Of the total, P9 billion are falling due this year, P20 billion spread out between 2006 and 2008 and the remaining P23 billion due in 2009.

Till debt do us far

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

LET'S say you are one of the millions who commute to work, spending four to five hours on the road each day—time which you can use to engage in a "sideline" instead.

You also probably notice that, lately, it doesn't take much—say the defeat of the Ginebra San Miguel Kings basketball team in the PBA finals—for people to start killing each other.

If people are getting a bit more hotheaded than usual, it may have something to do with this road rage phenomenon called DPWH.

The department has closed down lane after major lane in thoroughfares after major thoroughfares all over Metro Manila for … well, road repair.

It seems that the DPWH is trying to make up for lost opportunity in the lucrative road repair business. The department hardly did any repair last year.

Well, it was an election year, and this cute administration of Gloriaetta had better uses for public funds other than wasting it on infrastructure.

For example, it could—and in fact it did—spend a lot of money on the political campaign of Gloriaetta and her chosen candidates like Bong and Lito.

* * *

ANYWAY, the recent rush of the DPWH to repair some roads is a most welcome sight to the people of Metro Manila. At least things are finally moving in this country.

It's just that the DPWH took a lot of people by surprise. It did the repair work in the daytime, right when everybody is trying to get somewhere.

You know, the kids have to go to school, the fathers to work, and the mothers—they not only go to work, they also go to the laundry and the market as well, and then they run errands for the fathers!

Just imagine what the horrendous traffic, caused by all the roadwork, is like? The pace of the roadwork is painfully slow, without any sense of urgency whatsoever.

As a bonus to the millions of commuters, the DPWH and the MMDA have kept their plan to conduct the repair work in the daytime a well-guarded secret.

And need I say more why people were about ready to kill each other on the streets lately?

I mean, come on, what is stopping the DPWH from doing the repair work at night anyway? Vampires?

* * *

ONE reason may be is that this cute administration wants the whole metropolis to see that it is finally doing something about the rotten state of our infrastructure.

But then again, the elections are over, Gloriaetta has won, and the Supreme Court is likely going to rule on the election protest of the opposition in the next lifetime.

It stands to reason that Gloriaetta is no longer running in 2010, because this is the last term of this cute administration. The DPWH has no reason to show off.

It could therefore be a case of pure and simple lack of planning. If not, it's just pure and simple lack of concern for the public.

Let us therefore congratulate the MMDA and the DPWH for a job well done. We could not have accomplished the super-human feat of bearing with such horrendous traffic without their folly.

Next time, boss, please do the repairs during the Christmas rush. It will be more fun!

* * *

A PERIODIC report from the Department of Finance showed that, last year, our national debt increase by only P430 billion.

And so the national debt now amounts to a fantastic P3.75 trillion.

Now the national debt of P3.75 trillion is roughly equivalent to the national economy, give or take a few of the businesses raking it in, such as the cellular telephone companies and the night clubs on Quezon Avenue in Quezon City.

Once again, anyway, the hefty increase in our debts last year showed that we are still a long way towards solving our debt problem.

Sure, the debt burden was bequeathed to us by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, left unscathed by Tita Cory despite the international goodwill we earned during her time, kept hidden by Kuya Eddie by applying that make-up called privatization, and forgotten momentarily during two troublesome years of the man named Band … Wrist Band.

Finally, the debt bomb is exploding in the face of this cute administration of Gloriaetta.

The debt crisis of the 1980s never left us really. We just prolonged the day of reckoning. We cannot fool ourselves that everything is okay.

* * *

THIS country may be far from defaulting on its debts. What's that—until debt do us far?

Anyway, we are not expecting the government to default on its debts, only because the government can still borrow to pay off our maturing debts.

Heck, we even borrow just to pay for the interest on the total national debt.

By borrowing to pay off interests, the national debt will, in effect, just keep on going up.

On what we borrow for interest payment, we must also pay interest for. As every "professional economist" knows, such an inverted pyramid cannot last forever.

Besides, today, the national debt is the heaviest burden on the economy, simply because it weighs down on the national budget.

Almost 40 percent of the annual budget goes to debt service, meaning for the payment of the principal and the interest.

There is hardly any money left, therefore, for frivolous things like infrastructure, much less for useless things like health care and education. Who needs them?

* * *

AND SO the only way to start solving our debt problem is for this cute administration to generate more revenue. In short, more taxes!

That's why some bright guys in Congress want to impose the 12 percent VAT on the winnings of Pagcor.

Under its charter, Pagcor only pays the 5 percent franchise tax, making it exempted from the other forms of excise tax.

If you impose the 12 percent VAT on the company, it will have to borrow money to finance its operations, because nothing will be left for things like the salaries of its workers.

All of Pagcor's revenue—and I mean EVERYTHING—goes to the national government one way or another.

Pagcor can not—does not—retain a single centavo of its income. For Pagcor, it's not just a 12-percent VAT. Pagcor is subjected to a 100-percent tax. Got it, genius?

* * *

BUT aside from more taxes, this cute administration is now talking about privatization to raise more funds for its various projects. Nice lip service!

First thing it must do is, it must try to activate the capital markets. The stock market is moving, sure, but it's mainly due to the entry of hot money from abroad.

Hot money, as we all already know, does not stay here for good. It can leave faster than it came here.

So now the Palace is talking about selling the government shares in San Miguel. The move is actually good for the compa-

BREAKTIME/ B5

Chinabank posted record profit of ₱2.71B in '04

CHINA Banking Corp. said it posted a record profit of P2.71 billion in 2004, sustaining its strong performance in 2003 when it registered a net income of P2.62 billion.

The bank said that its profits had been exceeding the P2-billion mark for the past three years since 2002. From only P1 billion in 2001, China Bank's profit grew to P2.6 billion in 2002.

The bank said in a statement that its strong performance could be attributed to improved interest margins, a turnaround in loan bookings, higher fee-based revenue and sustained contributions from its trust and treasury-related business.

Its return on equity is still the highest in the industry at 14.22 percent, while return on assets stood at 2.44 percent.

Its non-performing loans ratio improved to 11.4 percent last year from 14.69 percent in 2003.

It set aside P785 million in loan loss provision last year, which beefed up its loan loss reserves to P6.75 billion. Total resources stood at P117.24 billion, above the P104.45 billion of the previous year.

Total deposits hit P85.85 billion boosted by the growth in low-cost deposits. Its total loans reached P51.44 billion, a P10.17 billion increase from 2003.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Peso hits . . .

From page B1

"There's continued interest from offshore investors in Philippine equity and bond markets, but I think it's more from individuals—the men on the street—now catching up to sell their US dollar holdings," said Wick Veloso, treasurer of British bank HSBC Plc.

"The peso has long been on a downtrend since 1999 so now there's no way but up," Veloso said.

As the market's 54.70 support level had been breached, Veloso said the next (dollar) support was now much deeper at 53.40-53.55, then flat at 52 and then 50.25.

"The Philippines in general has been playing catch-up for the first time since 1999. The main focus now is economic program and how to address the budget deficit. People are having much more focus on what the government has been doing positively," Veloso said.

Meanwhile, the BSP announced that its gross international reserves stood at $15.76 billion at end-January, lower by 1.7 percent than the $16.03 billion at end-December.

"The current GIR level was adequate to cover about four months of imports of goods and payments of services and income," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said.

The GIR level was also equivalent to 2.9 times the country's short-term debt based on original maturity and 1.5 times based on residual maturity.

Short-term debt based on residual maturity refers to outstanding short-term external debt on original maturity plus principal payments on medium- and long-term loans of the public and private sectors falling due within the next 12 months.

"The decline in reserves in January was attributed mainly to the debt service requirements of the national government and the BSP," Buenaventura said.

CURRENCIES

February 7, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.77675936	1.000000	54.7720
Japan	Yen	0.007465	0.009610	0.5264
United Kingdom	Pound	1.457278	1.876100	102.7577
Hongkong	Dollar	0.099606	0.128233	7.0236
Switzerland	Franc	0.641473	0.825832	45.2325
Canada	Dollar	0.622653	0.801603	43.9054
Singapore	Dollar	0.475286	0.611883	33.5141
Australia	Dollar	0.599814	0.772201	42.2950
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.060479	2.652661	145.2915
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.207131	0.266660	14.6055
Brunei	Dollar	0.473836	0.610016	33.4118
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000109	0.0060
Thailand	Baht	0.020277	0.026104	1.4298
UAE	Dirham	0.211612	0.272301	14.9145
Euro	Euro	1	1.287400	70.5135
ArgentinaPeso	0.266241	0.342759	18.7736	
BrazilREAL	0.299445	0.385505	21.1149	
Denmark	Kroner	0.134325	0.172930	9.4717
India	Rupee	0.017918	0.023068	1.2635
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.204438	0.263193	14.4156
Mexico	New Peso	0.069696	0.089726	4.9145
New Zealand	Dollar	0.55305	0.711997	38.9975
Norway	Kroner	0.120628	0.155296	8.5059
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013085	0.016846	0.9227
South Africa	Rand	0.127125	0.163661	8.9640
Korea	Won	0.000757	0.000974	0.0533
Sweden	Kroner	0.110149	0.141806	7.7670
Syria	Pound	0.014963	0.019264	1.0551
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024628	0.031706	1.7366
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000405	0.000522	0.0286

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 7, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4	4.3	4	4	53,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	31.5	31.5	30	31	167,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	57.5	57.5	56	56.5	1,325,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	45	46	45	46	10,900
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.44	0.44	820,000
International Exch. Bank	18.25	18.25	18	18.25	29,400
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32	33.5	32	33	3,848,500
Philippine National Bank	26	26.5	26	26.5	29,600
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	15,000
Security Bank Corp.	30	30	30	30	58,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	28.5	29.5	28.5	29	29,300
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	160,000
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2	2	1.98	1.98	748,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	120	120	120	120	1,010
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	17	17	16.75	16.75	115,700
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.52	1.58	1.52	1.56	12,575,000
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	170,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	945	945	940	945	432,300
Ipeople Inc.	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	36,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	700,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	10,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	18,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.75	3.75	9,267,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	30,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1410	1440	1410	1420	253,510
Ivantage Corp.	0.64	0.64	0.62	0.62	1,370,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	54,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	17	18	17	17	14,400
Manila Electric Co. B	26	26	25.5	26	682,700
Petron Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.9	3.9	4,070,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.8	1.82	1.8	1.82	3,237,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7.5	7.5	7.4	7.4	129,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.45	0.46	0.45	0.46	110,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.1	1.12	1.1	1.1	60,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.4	0.4	860,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91	10,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.6	4.9	4.6	4.6	9,018,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.46	1.48	1.3	1.3	93,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	39,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.4	3.45	3.4	3.45	41,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	165,400
Jollibee Foods Corp.	25.5	26	25.5	26	820,300
RFM Corp.	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	20,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	10,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	57.5	57.5	57.5	77,000
San Miguel Corp. B	76.5	77.5	76.5	77.5	52,000
Universal Robina Corp.	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.7	131,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	320,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0075	0.0075	0.007	0.007	42,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	7,000,000
Ayala Corp.	7.8	7.9	7.7	7.9	8,468,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.8	0.84	0.79	0.79	1,950,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	650,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	50,000
APC Group Inc.	0.41	0.46	0.4	0.42	17,350,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	114,000,000
Aries Prime Res. Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	10,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.76	2,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	10,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.04	1.06	0.98	1	18,349,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.19	0.19	900,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.225	0.225	2,850,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.5	0.54	0.49	0.52	32,030,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	5.4	5.4	4.85	5.1	9,314,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.036	0.036	0.036	0.036	4,400,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.16	1.2	1.16	1.2	1,326,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	9	9.1	9	9	695,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	45	46.5	45	45	1,803,900
Global Equities Inc.	0.0775	0.0775	0.0775	0.0775	2,000,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.2	1.22	1.2	1.22	276,000
Ionics Inc.	1.86	1.9	1.8	1.82	636,000
Jardine Davies Inc.	22	22	22	22	5,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3	3	3	3	279,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.32	2.32	2.24	2.24	633,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.52	1.58	1.52	1.58	9,732,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.51	0.53	0.5	0.5	57,640,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.21	0.3	0.21	0.3	50,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	60,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	200,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	50,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	300,000
South China Resources Inc	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	120,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	50,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	1,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.14	0.135	0.14	1,360,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	700,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.225	250,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	1	1	1	1	100,000
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	5,000
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.14	1.3	1.14	1.3	130,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.82	1.84	1.8	1.8	213,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.08	0.08	2,700,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	100,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.68	0.69	0.66	0.68	13,810,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	739,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.58	0.59	0.58	0.58	860,000
Manila Jockey Club	3.1	3.6	3.1	3.6	170,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.35	2,860,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	16.75	16.75	16.25	16.25	528,400
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	1,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9.1	9.4	9.1	9.4	6,960,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	50,000
C & P Homes Inc	0.32	0.34	0.32	0.33	6,790,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.18	0.19	0.17	0.17	4,910,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	80,000
Empire East Land Inc	0.44	0.48	0.44	0.47	58,080,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.52	1.64	1.52	1.64	12,218,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.19	0.205	0.19	0.205	190,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	3,240,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	20,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.11	0.15	0.11	0.145	3,900,000
Primex Corp.	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.3	120,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	115,000
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.215	0.22	0.215	0.215	490,000
SM Development Corp.	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.66	754,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.5	8.6	8.5	8.6	812,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.8	0.8	0.79	0.79	180,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	0.85	0.85	0.8	0.8	110,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.013	247,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	7.4	7.4	6.6	6.8	784,000
Benguet Corp. A	9.4	9.4	8	8	126,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	4.45	4.45	4.1	4.1	95,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.41	0.42	0.35	0.36	32,740,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.46	0.47	0.42	0.42	45,250,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.024	0.024	0.021	0.022	582,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.034	0.034	0.03	0.031	866,100,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	155,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.14	1.14	1.06	1.1	10,004,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.5	1.5	1.32	1.34	19,478,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	49	51	48.5	50.5	6,895,900
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	700,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	5,300,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.007	0.007	158,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0075	0.008	0.0075	0.0075	175,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	460,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	70,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	40,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.105	0.105	0.1	0.1	4,500,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.35	550,000

DISCLOSURES

FIRST Philippine Holdings Corp. confirmed that it expects to continue generating higher earnings this year mainly on contributions from its power business and tollways operation.

* * *

AYALA Corp. will conduct an analysts' briefing at 3:30 p.m. on Feb. 17 at South Rooms A & B, 25/F Tower One, Ayala Triangle, Ayala Ave., Makati City.

* * *

EQUITABLE PCI Bank successfully sold its $100 million three-year senior note offering after concluding its international roadshow, which included Singapore, Hong Kong and London.

* * *

A. BROWN Co. Inc. bought 60,000 BRN shares at P0.65 per share.

* * *

FRANCIS Peter Zagala resigned as corporate secretary of **Unioil Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.** He was replaced by Ruben Aldea on Oct 5, 2004. ***Compiled by D.J. Yap, PDI Research***

BIR, Customs . . .

From page B1

ing. The shipment was misdeclared as electrical materials.

The BOC also detected P5 million worth of fake DVDs, which were misdeclared as 285 cases of plastic accessories from Malaysia. Other items seized were: P1.5 million worth of Maling Luncheon meat, which was misdeclared as plastic toys and consigned to Shumacher Enterprises; P1.5-million Nissan Lagro and Nissan Prairie, which were consigned to a certain Katherine Yu Gabriel and which were misdeclared as personal effects, and a Toyota Rav-4 and a Land Cruiser, which were attempted to be brought outside the Subic Freeport Zone without paying proper taxes, and a Toyota Lexus RX300, which was also brought in without payment of proper taxes and duties.

A year to crow about

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

TO ALL my Chinese friends greetings from me, KUNG HEI, and my wife, FAT CHOI. I was given a Chinese watch. It goes tikoy tock, tikoy tock. The FDA has banned chop suey as it can lead to sueycide. According to a Hong Kong newspaper, a rich businessman choked to death eating long-life noodles. As it is the Year of the Rooster, we will be eating roost duck. After eating our fill, we will chou-en-lai.

My wife had plastic surgery today. I cut up all her credit cards.

The INC is against VAT; the Catholic Church supports it. A previous pope said, "Impose VAT I CAN. And that's how the VATICAN got its name." It is amazing VAT I CAN do with words.

* * *

I AM TOO exhausted to write jokes after Friday's hectic day when Semirara rose 35 percent and traded over P900 million. The $59 million offer was 9 times oversubscribed and was the most successful IPO in years. It hit my target of at least P50 on the first day when it briefly touched P52 and it is now P51.50. Our Research Department has a target of P58.

On my first week back from my holiday, I felt rejuvenated and revisited Fil Hispano. Although I merely updated its progress, the shares soared to P10 before settling back to P9, at which level, two foreign brokers are buying all the shares. The rights issue of 1 for 2 at P1 has been confirmed but no date has been set.

The following week, I did a detailed write-up on the mining industry that took up a great deal of space and effort. I used the findings of Research to predict the winners and they were right. Their target of P1.80 for PXB was the absolute top and in my newsletter, I told all my subscribers to SELL at P1.78 and most of them did. I warned that after the seminar, interest would wane and PXB fell back to P1.34. It is nearly always right to BUY two weeks ahead of an event and SELL a day or two before. Intelligent speculators always anticipate events so by the time the good news is announced, it has already been discounted. At current depressed levels, mining shares are worth watching again.

Last week, although semi-retired, I wrote about Semi-rara. The opening of the coal mine will be attended by the former US Secretary Coal on Power now replaced by Condiments and Rice. Today, I do not intend to write up anything. I will, however, comment on company results and IPOs nearer to the date.

I don't know who is responsible for the IPO listings but they ought to be delisted for allowing Manila Water and SM Investment to be traded within 5 days of each other. This means that most investors with limited capital will be forced to choose between the two stocks and my guess is that most investors will go for a chance to invest in Shoemart. In fairness, I will not pass any opinion until I have studied both prospectuses.

I do not like the method used here, by which you have to reserve units without knowing the price you will pay. Initially, the price range of Semirara was a ridiculous P22-P44. They eventually narrowed it to P30-P36, a spread of 20 percent. Manila Water is being offered at P5-P6.50, a spread of 30 percent and it is simply unrealistic.

In London, decades ago, they used to offer a stock at a minimum price and then allow investors to indicate what price they were willing to pay. Using pesos instead of pounds, investors could indicate that they would:

BUY 100,000 at P1.00 (minimum price set)
50,000 at P1.10
25,000 at P1.20
10,000 at P1.30

Somebody else might just bid P1.50 for 100,000 and make sure of getting shares. The brokers would collect the thousands of bids and the issuing house would make their staff work through the night as there were no computers in those days. Starting with the highest bid, they would gradually go down until the issue was oversubscribed. Say for example, the issue was fully subscribed at P1.30, then that would be the strike price. All those who bid P1.30 or more would get their shares at that price; all those below the strike price were eliminated.

The system did not work very well because investors put in ridiculously high bids just to be sure of getting shares. So the shares opened at an unrealistically high price, there was no support and the price fell rapidly. After about 3 or 4 attempts at which we call a Dutch auction, the method was abandoned and we returned to a fixed price system. Asking people to BUY shares without knowing the price turns the whole process into a guessing game. If this is the way that the SEC/PSE is going to float IPOs, then the government should legalize jueteng. I don't see much difference.

After the phenomenal success of Semirara, investors would almost certainly have oversubscribed Manila Water, but the proximity of SM Investments means we have to wait and SY. The last thing the Stock Exchange wants to see is the Manila Water issue price going to a discount because of the competition. It will make investors IPO-sensitive. I respectfully suggest that the listing of SM Investment be delayed by 10 days so that there is a full 2 weeks between the two listing dates. I also feel strongly that in the future, we adhere to a fixed price. That way, analysts can determine whether future issues are good value or not and advise their clients accordingly.

The results from GLOBE were disappointing. In the second quarter, boosted by the election, they added 1.6 million new subscribers. In the third quarter, they added 1.2 million, which was in line with expectations. But in the last quarter, which includes the Christmas season, they only added 800,000. Touch Mobile slashed its rates and blamed competition. Now Piltel, ahead of its results, is trying to persuade the NTC that Digitel (Sun Cellular) does not have the right to offer an unlimited call and text service as they do in the US. If so, how

BEARBULL/ B5

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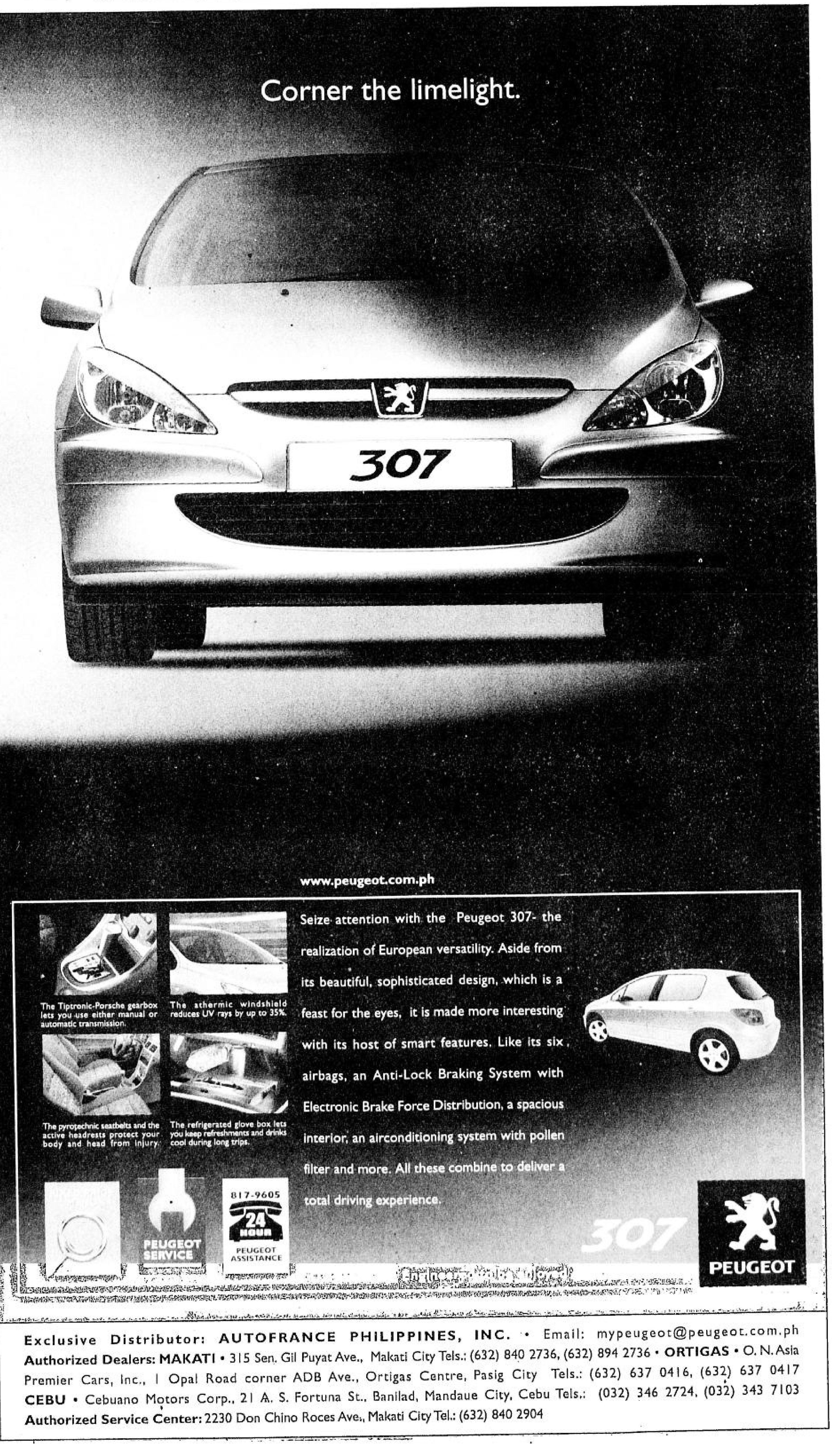
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People, Events & Products

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

1st dental spa opens Feb. 13

COME Feb. 13, the first dental spa will open its doors to the public at Callospa Resort, Antipolo City's only full-service spa and resort for the discriminating crowd.

Located in Colaique, Antipolo, a 40-minute ride from Ortigas Center, this new concept is a dental clinic complete with all the amenities of a spa sanctuary. Widely practiced in Europe and the United States, Callospa Resort owner Gelly Garcia and daughter-in-law dentist Gigi Garcia decided to bring the concept of spa dentistry to the Philippines.

Instead of the regular antiseptic clinical scent, you are welcomed with a pervading eucalyptus air, enveloped in soothing lights and lulled in sounds of trickling waterfalls. The dental spa is for adults only. Children are not allowed to avoid untoward noises to relax other guests.

To make each patient's visit a totally different experience, Callospa Resort has designed several packages that guarantee total pampering from head to toe at affordable prices.

The dental spa is run by Dr. Gigi Garcia. One can have a foot massage, manicure, pedicure and hand paraffin on the side while dental treatments are being done. This way, busy people can maximize their precious time. Daughter Dr. Charina Garcia runs the family style spa located also within the resort.

The trip to the dental spa is also meant to be a family affair or a getaway with close friends. While the adult members are having their dental and spa treatments, the younger members of the family can play badminton, go swimming, fishing, sing along with the videoke or just plain bond with the family. The resort is also a good venue for indoor and outdoor weddings, summer outings, graduation and conventions.

The opening of the dental spa coincides with Callospa Resort owners Tony and Gelly Garcia's 35 years of togetherness. Since it would be Valentine's Day, guests are treated to a sit-down dinner and serenaded with classic love songs complete with a tenor a la Bocelli. In between songs, art pieces will be auctioned off by the Sinag Artists Group of Antipolo to give the guests the chance to own direct-from-artist-prices art pieces.

Roses are available at the gate, the sale of which will go to Tony Garcia's favorite civic group, Kiwanis Club of Antipolo.

The occasion will be emceed by Ernie Fresnido of Mellow Touch. For more information, call 650-7889, 0919-8552124, 0917-8243715, or log on to www.geocities.com/callospa.

PDI PHOTO/BETOY JOHNSON

SCHERING PHILIPPINE CORP DONATES TO INFANTA DISASTER VICTIMS

Schering Philippine Corp through the Philippine Daily Inquirer's involvement with Operation Sagip Buhay, recently turned over the company and its employees' donation for the typhoon victims of Infanta, Quezon. The donation also served as a springboard for Schering Philippine Corp's extensive social responsibility programs lined up to commemorate their 40th anniversary in 2005. Photo shows (from left): Sanny Jegillos of IDRM, PDI president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, Fr. Francis Lucas of Operation Sagip Buhay, Schering Philippine Corp president and general manager Dr. Christiane Hamacher, group product manager Cety Quetula and corporate events coordinator Noel Jesus Macoy.

Universal Motors Corporation
NISSAN COMMONWEALTH INC.
2004
DEALER OF THE YEAR
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NISSAN COMMONWEALTH IS UMC'S DEALER OF THE YEAR

Universal Motors Corporation (UMC), the assembler and distributor of Nissan Patrol, Frontier, and Urvan, recently presented Nissan Commonwealth, Inc. (NCW) with the Dealer of the Year Award during the Dealer Recognition Night held at the UMC head office in Makati City. Having won the top award in 2002 and 2003, NCW is proud to have maintained its excellent performance in vehicle sales, spare parts operations, service operations and customer satisfaction. Shown in photo are (from left): NCW parts manager Edgardo Navarro, NCW COO Leo San Juan, NCW chair and president Amado San Juan, UMC SVP for marketing Elizabeth Lee, Nissan Motors Ltd general overseas market sales division executive Akihiro Nakanishi, NCW customer relations manager Nancy dela Merced, NCW VP for operations Dante Reyes, UMC SVP for finance Rodrigo Janeo, NCW general sales manager Bong Segumalian, and NCW service manager Gilbert Bautista.

Acsat: Relevant education at its best

THE ASIAN College of Science and Technology (Acsat) is a prestigious educational institution that has gained renown and reaped awards for its pioneering approach in the field of scientific and technical education.

Acsat was founded by the husband and wife team of Constancio A. Sia and Gloria D. Sia. A native of Dumaguete, the energetic entrepreneur started out as a CPA who initially worked with Sycip, Gorres and Velayo's audit and consulting department. His wife, on the other hand, prides herself with her background in home economics and entrepreneurship, and was the dynamo who was largely responsible for setting up the school from scratch.

Like most revolutionary ideas, Acsat was created out of a pressing need. "Since I was working with a lot of electronics engineers, I felt that I had to really know electronics inside out," Mr. Sia recounts. Driven by their desire to fulfill their own needs, the Sias thought that perhaps, by starting a new school with modern facilities, a better faculty and healthier environs, maybe they could also set a precedent for the new generation of students looking out for a reputable technical school. And so, in 1972, Acsat's predecessor, the Asian Institute of Electronics (AIE) was born.

In keeping with their vision of class and excellence, the Sias didn't think twice when it came to investing top-of-the-line equipment for the school.

In no time, Acsat also opened in Baliuag, Cabanatuan, Dumaguete and Cagayan de Oro. To date, Acsat has established ten campuses all over the country, with its main campus situated at #1013 Aurora Blvd, Cubao, Q.C.

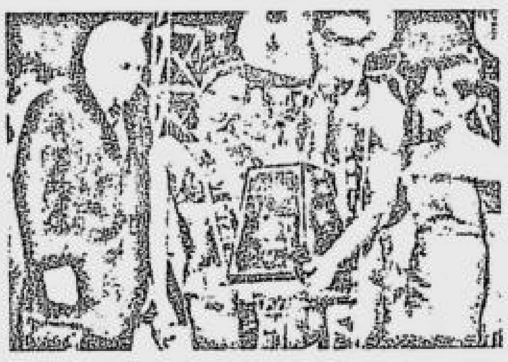
In 1995, at the height of the computer boom, with the full consent and approval of the Commission on Higher Education, AIE was converted into a full-fledged college: the Asian College of Science and Technology Foundation Inc (Acsat). The name change reflected the school's renewed focus not just on computer education, but on its newer course offerings such as Nursing, Business Administration, Computer Engineering and Computer Systems. They also started offering Bachelor's Degrees this time, unlike previous years when they only had two-year courses.

ACSAT founders Constancio and Gloria Sia.

Since the start, Acsat has always been actively encouraging its students to participate in various sorts of technical inter-school competitions. And because of their excellent training, most of the school's representatives emerge triumphant in their quest.

It's not surprising how Acsat's winning philosophy is aptly stated in its motto: "Your School of Success," which reflects the founders' emphasis on results-oriented education.

SLIMMERS WORLD MR AND MS GREAT BODIES 2004



Slimmers World International's Mr and Ms Great Bodies celebrated its 10th year, announcing new title-holders last Dec. 17, 2004 at the Isla Ballroom of the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel. The 2004 Mr and Ms Great Bodies are Carlos Morales of Slimmers World SM City and Karen Villanueva of Slimmers World MegaMall. Morales is a respected actor who joined the competition for the challenge. Villanueva is an account executive who competed to discover how she could push her body to its physical peak. Shown in photo are Morales and Villanueva with SWI president Ronald Joseph Moy and OIC of SWI Phils Helen Grace Camacho.

Bits Clips

Sun Life fetes Year of the Rooster

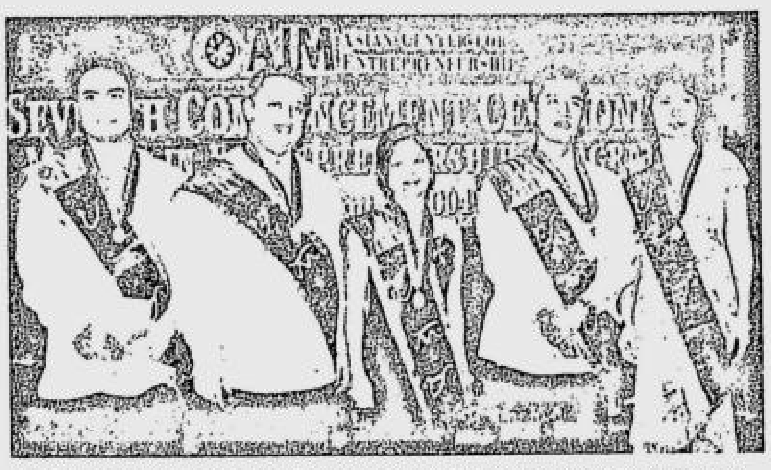
TODAY, Sun Life Financial (Phils) welcomes the Chinese New Year with not one but two grand celebrations in Metro Manila, one in its Ortigas branch, followed shortly by a second one in its Binondo office. Sun Life will also extend its celebration to other parts of the country like Iloilo, Davao, Cebu, and Cagayan de Oro. The highlight of the Metro Manila festivities will be what is touted as the longest dragon-dance this side of Asia measuring 285 feet. There will also be a motorcade and a talk by Feng Shui Master William Ang. The merrymaking in Binondo will include a float parade organized by the city of Manila, a Chinese cultural show and a concert featuring TV/movie personalities. While all these are happening, a Sun Life Financial roving greeting ad truck will be going around Ortigas and Binondo to communicate a message of prosperity and good luck for the New year. The celebrations are at 9 a.m. at the Sun Life Ortigas office at Emerald Avenue and at 3 p.m. at its Binondo Office located at the corner of Quintin Paredes and Dasmarinas Streets.

Celebration of the Eucharist

AS WE celebrate the Year of the Eucharist with Mary, come and join Sr. Briege McKenna, OSC and Fr. Kevin Scallon, CM today from 2 to 6 p.m. at the Plenary Hall of the PICC at the Roxas Blvd., Manila, for the talks and the Celebration of the Eucharist and a Eucharistic Healing Service. Fr. Kevin will officiate at the Eucharistic Celebration and Sr. Briege will pray during the Eucharistic Healing Service to follow after the Mass. Kindly make arrangements with the secretariat if you are to bring the sick in wheelchairs or lying on their beds: Catholic Women's League at 523-0641; Assisi Development Foundation Inc at 632-1001 to 03 (look for Anton or Maritess).

LEISURE FARMS HOLDS TURNOVER CEREMONY

Alfred Xerez-Burgos III, VP and SBU head of Leisure Farms recently made a turnover of the Leisure Farms Handbook to lot owners (2nd from left respectively) Victorio Mario Dimagiba, Emmanuel Dizon, Josefina Marasigan, Julieta Lim, Edgar Talavera, Catalina Rosales, Elizabeth Cowper and Neomi Castro. Leisure Farms is a project of Landco Pacific Corp.



AIM MASTER IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP GRADUATES

Asian Institute of Management recently concluded its 7th commencement ceremonies for Master in Entrepreneurship Program in its Makati Campus. The Superior Performance Awardees are (from left): William Go (Victoria Court), Jose Marie Tanalgo (Bacolod Chicken Inasal), Lainie Ramoso (Faxcable Enterprise), Primo Allan Jarlos (AHD-Advance Communications Systems Inc) and Ma. Ines Que (Wonderphoto).

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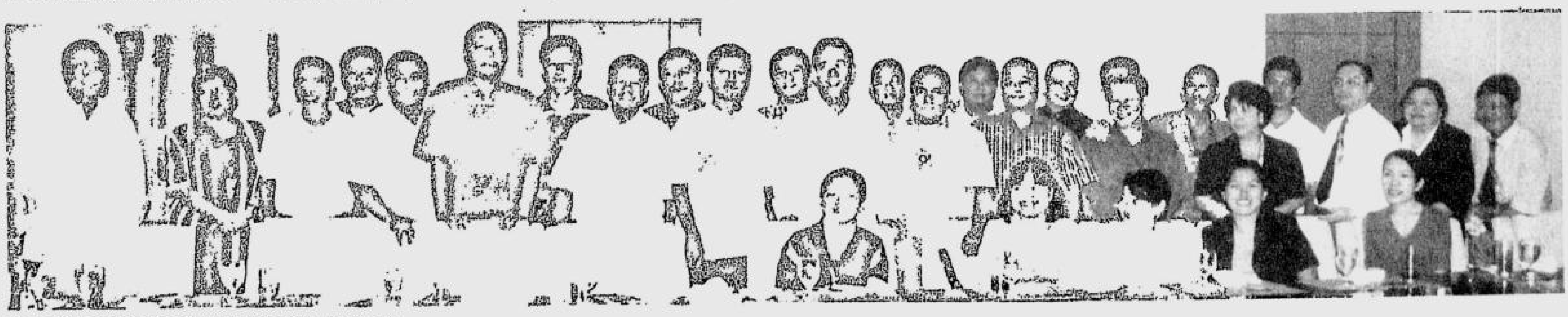
Philippine Daily Inquirer (Donald Lim) Globe Gentext (Mutya Laxa), and Air 21 (Reuben Pangan Jr.), the major sponsors of the 2nd Leap Leaders Congress are given framed photo replicas of the Leap posters by the presidents of the Rotary and Inner Wheel Clubs of Makati North Ric dela Torre and Cora Tan. The congress to be held on Feb. 11, at Crossroad 77 Convention Center expects an attendance of 1000 top graduating college students from Metro Manila colleges and universities for a one-day interactive learning experience with achievers and models of excellence to inspire self-confidence, love of country and service to our countrymen. For more details, please call the Leap Leaders Secretariat at 459-2121



BPI CONCLUDES CBAS WITH 22 UNIONS

The Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) has successfully concluded Collective Bargaining Agreements with 22 out of its 24 unions. BPI president Aurelio Montinola III met with the presidents and representatives of the various union chapters who had already signed the CBAs in a meeting held recently. Representing labor are: Benedicto Tiotuico, Rolando Santos, Edita Agustin, Javier Tabernilla, Carlito Bisa, Renato Salaum, Nereo Macanda, Felipe Flores Jr., Mario Serato, Christine Dante, Joel Al Aguelo, Alex Cassion, Augustin Dalid, and Ronaldo Seballos (Fubu); Jollylyn Lagrosa Pasaporte, Ricky Dioso and Trina Diaz (FFW); Samuel Lauron (ALU); Ramon Hefti Jr. (Independent). Guests included Glenn Santiago and Virgilio Ramos of the BPI Family Bank Union who has concluded their CBA previously. BPI Management was led by BPI president Aurelio Montinola III, SVP and HR group head Jesus Razon, VP Dina Orosa, VP Andrew Cua and Nap Franco, Jony Arcinue, Rita Canchela, Sherry Gosengfiao, Ricky Zerrudo of HR-Employee Relations and Teresita Atienza of HR-Compensation.

Bearbull

From page B3

come it took so long for them to come to this conclusion?

We must await a reply from the NTC but I cannot see why a small telecom company cannot take a huge gamble to break into a market controlled by Smart and Globe. At the end of 2004, DGTL had 1.1 million subscribers. Its target for 2005 is to get 2 million subscribers, which is the minimum required to break even. They may fail to achieve this or they may not be able to cope with the volume of traffic. That is their gamble but if they succeed, and I hope they do, why should the NTC stifle competition that benefits the public. People have little to be happy about these days, particularly as the poor read that the stock market is at a 5-year high and the rich are getting richer. So I hope that the NTC will not interfere. Unfortunately, Smart and Globe are giants with immense clout and the government may buckle.

In the past, they have shown themselves more beholden to corporations and religious organizations than to the public, but I hope that right will prevail and DGTL be allowed to continue. In view of their squealing, I would guess that PLTL is going to miss its 2004 target to P1.2 billion. They will still receive billions from Smart as the result of the change in the revenue sharing, which gives PLTL 80 percent on their sales instead of 50 percent. This is a perfectly legitimate tax-avoidance scheme using their huge losses, but it will cost the government about P16 billion over the next 5 years. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

Breaktime ...

From page B2

ny. It removes the threat of a government takeover, getting the business out of the dizzying orbit of politics.

Precisely, under its chair Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., San Miguel invited investors like Kirin Beer of Japan and the SM group of Tatang Henry Sy, to stave off any government takeover of management, a move conceived and executed by Danding's most trusted executive, San Miguel vice chair Ramon Ang.

For so long now, some groups close to this cute administration were salivating over San Miguel. What stopped them from grabbing the management away from Danding's group was the sentiment of the market.

How do you kick out a management team that is doing so well, attracting investments from the likes of Kirin?

Now, the question is, will the sale of those government-held shares in San Miguel materialize within our lifetime?

Hard to say!

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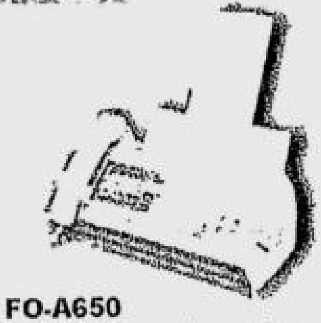

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As the program champion of the Asian Institute of Management's Center for Development Management (CDM) and the Asian Center for Entrepreneurship (ACE), he designed and developed the socially relevant and responsive Master in Development Management (MDM) for leaders and managers in government and private voluntary organizations as well as the highly innovative Master in Entrepreneurship (ME) for small and medium scale entrepreneurs. He was also instrumental in the introduction of the Master in Business Administration (MBA) Major in Finance. He teaches courses in development of enterprise, banking and finance, social marketing, strategic management, environmental analysis, management of change, creative and intuitive management, project management, and entrepreneurship.

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Take Charge Doc!

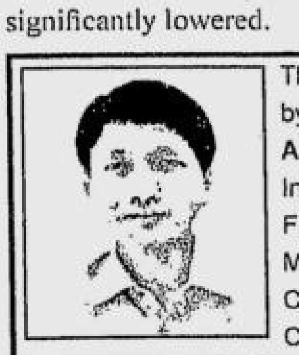
Dr. Nicky S. Montoya

Take Charge Doc! is your weekly question and answer guide on general health issues and illnesses. MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. And in a common thrust with the campaigns of the government, Take Charge Doc! parallels its features on the Calendar of Health Events of the Department of Health.

Does having a healthy lifestyle mean that I won't get heart disease?

A direct answer would be NO. Heart disease has a myriad factors. **Age**, 45 and up for males, 55 and up for females, and **family history** are non-modifiable factors or so-called "fixed" factors. The modifiable risks are **smoking**, **dyslipidemia** (high LDL cholesterol and triglycerides, low HDL cholesterol), **diabetes**, **hypertension** and **obesity**. Quitting smoking for smokers, eating healthy food (low cholesterol) and regular exercise (30-60 minute brisk walking 3-4 times a week) are such lifestyle changes which may lessen the risk to heart ailment. Obese individuals should aim for an ideal weight by following a diet program and more rigorous exercises. For hypertensive and diabetic persons, a regular follow-up with their physician is highly recommended.

Living a healthy lifestyle may not totally prevent heart disease but the risk of developing one is significantly lowered.



This week's answer to our question on lifestyles and heart ailment was provided by our accredited doctor at Chinese General Hospital and Medical Center, Dr. **Allan B. Ruales.** Dr. Ruales, a MEDICard provider for over 5 years, specializes in Internal Medicine. He graduated from Medicine at the Manila Center University-FDTMF in 1989 then took residency training for a specialization in Internal Medicine at Chinese General Hospital until 1993. He also subspecializes in Adult Cardiology, finishing his residency at St. Luke's Medical Center Heart Institute. Currently, Dr. Ruales is also a faculty member of the College of Medicine at MCU-FDTMF. MEDICard members may seek consultation services at his clinic, Room C-11, Mondays to Saturdays, except Tuesdays, from 1-5 in the afternoon.

BE HEARD AND BE READ. Write to DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA (c/o *TAKE CHARGE DOC!*) or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for inquiries on health matters.

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DBP Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines is inviting interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for:

PROJECT	APPROVED BUDGET
Consultancy Services for World Bank-Development Bank of the Philippines Rural Power Project	Source of Fund: World Bank-GEF Grant P 1,900,000.00

Contract Begins: April 1, 2005
Schedule of Activities:

Particulars	Date	Venue
Submission and Opening of Letter of Intent (LOI) and Eligibility Requirement Documents	"On or before" 9:00 a.m. of February 9, 2005 (Wednesday)	BAC Secretariat, 6th/ Floor, DBP Building, Makati City
Pre-Bidding Conference	February 23, 2005 (Wednesday) at 9:00 a.m.	PSM, 6th Floor, DBP Building, Makati City
Submission of Technical Proposal and Financial Proposal of Eligible Consultants/ Bidders	"On or before" 9:00 a.m. of March 8, 2005 (Tuesday)	BAC Secretariat, 6th Floor, DBP Building, Makati City
Opening of Technical Proposal	March 8, 2005 (Tuesday) at 10:00 a.m.	OPS Conference Room, 5th/Floor, DBP Building, Makati City

DBP is in need of consultancy services for capacity building program which will strengthen DBP's capability in attracting borrowers for Rural Power Project and to effectively manage the processing, appraisal performance monitoring and implementation of new and renewable energy projects. Applications for eligibility check is open to individuals/firms with at least three (3) years of experience on this field. Interested parties may secure the Eligibility Requirement Forms from the Procurement Services Division, 6th Floor, DBP Building, Makati City or you may download these forms at www.devbankphil.com.ph and at the Electronic Procurement Service of the Department of Budget and Management. A non-refundable fee of Php 500.00 will be charged to all eligible bidders. Quality Based (QB) method of evaluation will be used in the evaluation of proposals.

The Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act no. 9184 series of 2003 will be used in the conduct of this Bidding.

The DBP reserves the right to reject documents that do not comply with the requirements.

For further inquiries, please call telephone numbers 8126375/8151613.

Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–Feb. 1 & 8, 2005)

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice of lost Stck. Cert# 268921 of Oriental Petroleum & Minerals Corp. of FERMINA M. GENERAL.
(PDI-Jan 25, Feb 1 & 8, 2005)

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WANTED:
(2) SEWING MACHINE MECHANICS

Qualifications:

- With at least 2 years experience in Industrial Sewing Machine maintenance such as **SINGLE NEEDLE MACHINE, 4-THREAD OVERLOCK MACHINE, COVER STITCH MACHINE, SPECIAL MACHINES**
- Male, at least 25 years old
- Willing to work overtime

Applicants may come for interview, Mondays-Fridays, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. only.

The politics of life on Up Close and Personal

AS A pre valentine episode special Up Close and Personal with Marissa Del Mar... featured a budding lady legislator and her family life. The work of a legislator is to amend rules and pass bills. She is representing the first district of Batangas. She is the daughter of Secretary Eduardo Ermita, who has become her icon to get into politics. The show featured how Rep. Eileen Ermita-Buhain manages to merge into being a politician, a wife and a mother. She was asked about current issues concerning her district and the nation as well, and how politics drew Rep. Eileen Ermita and Eric Buhain together, and now both serving the country. The show was televised last Feb. 8 over IBC 13.

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

APPLICATION FOR THE APPROVAL OF APPLICANT'S (1) BUSINESS SEPARATION AND UNBUNDLING PLAN (BSUP) and (2) ACCOUNTING AND COST ALLOCATION MANUAL (ACAM) IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 36 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO 9136 AND RULE 10 OF ITS IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS

ERC Case No. 2004-484

ANGELES ELECTRIC CORPORATION (AEC),
Applicant

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given of the Filing on December 29 2004 by applicant Angeles Electric Corporation (AEC) of an application docketed as ERC Case No 2004-484 for approval of its (1) Business Separation and Unbundling Plan (BSUP) and (2) Accounting and Cost Allocation Manual (ACAM) in accordance with the provisions of Section 36 of Republic Act No 9136 and Rule 10 of its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

The Commission has set the application for hearing on March 10, 2005 at two o'clock (2:00 p.m.) in the afternoon at the ERC Hearing Room 15th Floor Pacific Center Building San Miguel Avenue Pasig City

All interested parties who may wish to comment on or oppose the said application should file their comments and/or oppositions on or before the date of hearing. Such parties who may wish to have the details of the application and who shall have manifested to the Commission their desire and intention to participate actively in the proceedings may request that before the date of hearing they be furnished with copies of the application by the applicant which is hereby directed to furnish the parties making such request with copies of the application and its attachments. Likewise, any such interested party may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS the Honorable RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR. Chairman and the Honorables OLIVER B. BUTALID JESUS N. ALCORDO and ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN Commissioners, Energy Regulatory Commission, this 25th day of January 2005 at Pasig City

(Sgd.) MARIA TERESA A. R. CASTAÑEDA
Director II

(PDI - Feb 8, 2005)

First Int'l Taekwon-Do Federation Championships

THE International Taekwon-Do Federation Philippines will hold its First ITFP Championships on February 27 at the Tivoli Royale Country Club in Quezon City.

The participants will come from the different ITF Gyms all over the country. The main events for the championships will be sparring and pattern tournaments.

This event is approved by Norman Bernard, president of National Governing Body-ITFP and spearheaded by ITFP Katipunan Gym. "It's about time that the true techniques of Taekwon-Do formed by the founder Gen. Choi Hong Hi be shown to all martial artists," said Jun Sta. Ana, competition director International Taekwon-Do Federation Philippines.

For tickets or more information, contact Jun Sta. Ana 09164252103/ 4362571 or proceed to ITFP Katipunan Gym, 2nd floor, No. 309 WM Bldg., Katipunan Ave., Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

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Fr. James Ryan, C.Ss.R., 89

RENOWNED Redemptorist vocation director Fr. James Ryan, C.Ss.R. passed away last February 3, 2005, in Ballarat, Australia. He was 89.

Fr. Ryan came to the Philippines in 1951, ten years after his ordination. He worked in barrio missions in various parts of the country, and was hospital chaplain at San Juan de Dios. He became a byword in the 1960s amid the active drive by Redemptorist missionaries for vocations. He was a popular figure in several campuses where he gave talks to invite the youth to consider the Redemptorist missionary life.

Fr. Ryan was serving in the Philippines until 1995 during which he came home for a vacation in Australia.

Most of Fr. Ryan's vocation recruits studied at the Redemptorist Juvenate, the Congregation's Minor Seminary in Antipolo.

All Juvenists are invited to join the Eucharistic Celebration in memory of Fr. Ryan on February 8, Tuesday, 5:45 p.m. at the National Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help in Baclaran.

> "...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
> — 2 Corinthians 5:8

POLIGENA DUQUE BALBIDO

Peacefully joined our Creator
on February 5, 2005 at the age of 93.

Her bereaved-daughter **Teresita** and son-in-law **Jesus**; sister **Basilia**; nephews; nieces; grandchildren; greatgrandchildren, other relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at St. Peter Memorial Chapels, Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be today, February 8, 2005 at the Himlayang Pilipino, Tandang Sora, Quezon City at 10:00 A.M.

ROSARIO (CHARO) GALANG

September 7, 1918 – January 5, 2005

Beloved wife of the late **Bernardo Ma. Galang**. Her bereaved children, **Benny & Cel, Jomari & Lilian, Maridette (R.G.) & Charly P. Chan, Marissa (Jojang) & Matthew Aguas**; grandchildren: **Christopher & Angelica, Chylle, Catherine**; sisters: **Soledad B. Gabuya, Mayor Herminia B. Jurado, Remedios C. Basa** & the whole Basa-Constantino clan request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

The body lies in state at the San Nicolas de Tolentino Parish Church, Pluto St., Project 6, at the back of Cherry Foodarama, Congressional Avenue. Interment at Himlayan Pilipino, Tandang Sora follows after the 9 a.m. Mass.

Thank You....

For all the support you gave our family
during those trying days of Rene's illness

For all the prayers you offered for his
quick recovery and eventually his
eternal peace

For laughing at his corny punchlines
and still having the kindest words
to say about him

For the overwhelming love and respect
you showered him with, and allowing him
to inspire you, in life and in death

Today, Rene does have a lot to show
for his life, when he enters Heaven's
gates to start anew in his real home
with God Almighty.

From the Family of
Rene C. Aldiosa
March 25, 1954- January 31, 2005

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
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❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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SK BENJAMIN M. TIBAYAN

of Pasay City and BF Homes, Parañaque City

Peacefully joined his Creator on February 06, 2005 at the age of 80.

His bereaved wife **Naty**, only child **Fe** and **Phil**; grandchildren: **Fritz and Ding, Jumboy, Patty**; great grandchildren: **Fonzie and Luis**, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His body lies in state at Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels, Sucat Road, Parañaque City.

Interment will be at Manila Memorial Park, Sucat Road, Parañaque City on February 10, 2005, Thursday, after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

CLASSIFIEDS

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: The applicants should be able to teach all subjects in any grade in the elementary school.

QUALIFICATIONS:
- ✓ Degree in Education
- ✓ Teaching License
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- ✓ Fluent in oral and written English
- ✓ 25-35 years old
- ✓ Dedicated, resourceful and creative with a pleasant personality

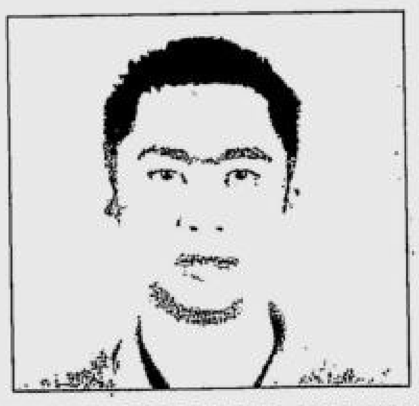
If you have these qualifications, send your resume via email to: clarissa53@yahoo.com ***not later than Friday, February 4*** or Bring your resume (photo included) ***not later than Sunday, 13 February*** to:

43 BF Resort III
Las Pinas, Metro Manila

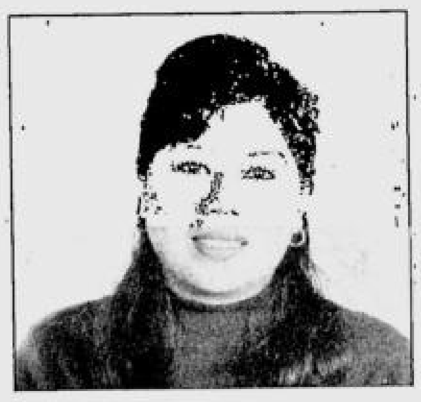
Don't forget to leave your telephone number where we can reach you soonest.

Short-listed applicants will be notified by phone/SMS and will be invited to come for an interview on the 15th and 16th of February 2005.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC



PARK JOHNSON P. ZARATE



ELIZABETH P. DE LUNA

The public is hereby informed that **PARK JOHNSON P. ZARATE** and **ELIZABETH P. DE LUNA**, whose photos appear above, are no longer connected with **SMART Communications, Inc.** effective **September 7, 2004** and **December 11, 2004** respectively.

Henceforth, they no longer have the authority to transact or conduct business in behalf of SMART.

(PDI - Feb 8 2005)

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Republic of the Philippines
City of Iligan
OFFICE OF THE BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

February 2, 2005

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The City Government of Iligan, thru the Bids and Awards Committee invites interested suppliers, distributors and/or manufacturers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply and delivery of the following:

	PARTICULARS	ABC
A.	PR No. 286 for 243 cu.m. Ready Mix Concrete fc'4000 Psi at 28 days, etc. (various construction materials) Washed sand, etc. (various construction materials)	P2,203,971.97

Dates for submission of eligibility requirements, pre-bid conference, issuance of bid documents and opening of bids are as follows:

B.	Issuance of Bid Documents	February 14, 2005
C.	Pre-Bid Conference	March 16, 2005
D.	Submission of Eligibility Requirements and Bids	March 28, 2005
E.	Opening of Bids	March 28, 2005

The eligibility check and preliminary examination of bids shall be on non-discretionary "pass fail" criteria. Evaluation of bids and post-qualification shall be in accordance with the applicable provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, and are contained in the Bid Documents which can be obtained from the BAC Secretariat, City General Services Office, Buhanginan Hill, Pala-o, Iligan City.

Prospective bidders in need for further information may forward their inquiry to:

The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee
Thru: BAC Secretariat
CGSO, Buhanginan Hill, Palao
Iligan City
Telephone No. 221-4638/3516759/221-4340

The City Government of Iligan neither assumes any obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of their bids nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) FRANKLIN D. MAATA
City Engineer
Chairman, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI - Feb 8 & 15 2005)

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF UNSERVICEABLE ITEMS

"AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

DATE OF BIDDING : Feb. 24, 2005, 2:00 PM, Solarium Hall, Building-1 Ground Floor NPC-Head Office, Agham Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding for the sale of the following:

Item	Description and Location	Minimum Bid Price
	SCHEDULE-III	
-1-	One (1) lot: Unserviceable Items consisting of Eleven (11) units Junk Motor Vehicles, One (1) unit cannibalized Fork-Lift, One (1) unit Fuel Oil Tank for dismantling, One (1) Over-Head Crane Assembly inside Power House for dismantling and One (1) Over-Head Crane Assembly outside Power House for dismantling. Located at the defunct Amlan Diesel Power Plant within the TRANSCO S/S compound in Amlan, Negros Oriental	P 733,600.00 per lot

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGERS'/CASHIERS CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE.
2. LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN (2003 or 2004) ORIGINAL OR CERTIFIED XEROX COPY FOR THE BIDDER OR AN AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE COMPANY.

All interested parties who wish to secure bid forms for this public bidding must present a valid Tax Identification Card or Income Tax Return.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secure the bid form at P500.00/schedule from Mr. S.V. Lomuntad, Jr. / Mr. Al Plata at MMD, Ground Floor, Bldg.-1, NPC Head Office, corner Agham Road and Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City or call telephone no. 924-5384 **Deadline for issuance of the bid forms is until 4:30 PM, February 23, 2005.**

For the Materials Management Department
(Sgd.) FELIX B. TACATA, JR.
OIC, MMD

(PDI - February 7, 8 & 9, 2005)

BUSINESS

DFPI seeks compromise deal with BIR

By Michelle V. Remo

STATE-OWNED firm Duty Free Philippines Inc. is seeking a compromise deal with the Bureau of Internal Revenue over some P1 billion in unpaid tax liabilities.

Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. said Duty Free Philippines representatives had informed BIR officials in a meeting that the company could not afford to pay its entire back taxes.

He said Duty Free Philippines was seeking an arrangement that would allow it to pay only portion of the amount.

Parayno said the BIR would study the company's request. However, he said one possible compromise would involve the waiver of the interest charges and penalties on the back taxes.

Revenue Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares said that of the estimated P1 billion in unpaid liabilities of Duty Free Philippines, about P400 million represented interest and penalty charges. The P600 million represents the actual unpaid income and value-added taxes that accumulated from 1999 to 2002.

But Henares explained that under the law, the BIR could only grant a compromise or abate a taxpayer's liabilities under certain circumstances.

The following factors can support a request for compromise with the BIR:

- If the concerned taxpayer can establish that there is "doubtful validity" in the accuracy of the amount of taxes being collected;
- if the taxpayer is financially incapacitated to pay the taxes, and
- if there is administrative difficulty in collecting the taxes, and the amount of tax assessed by the BIR was excessive.

Duty Free Philippines earlier asked the government to exempt the company from income taxes and VAT, saying it was also government-owned.

The BIR and the Department of Finance, however, said that even government-owned and –controlled corporations were required to remit taxes.

"It cannot be exempted from taxes just because it is a state-owned firm. GOCCs have been subject to taxes since President Corazon Aquino's term, when a law imposing taxes on them was enacted," another BIR official said earlier.

The state-owned firm, which is a subsidiary of the Philippine Tourism Authority, had been seeking tax exemption since for several years now. During the term of Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, the DOF turned down this request.

The BIR is hard pressed to plug tax leaks and crack down on tax cheats, as it is tasked to collect P547 billion this year, or 16 percent higher than the P470 billion it collected in 2004.

The BIR, accounting for over 60 percent of the national government's revenue collection, missed its P476.3-billion collection goal last year. The shortfall, however, was offset by the higher-than-projected revenue collection of other agencies, including the Bureau of Customs.

Insurance body for pre-need firms pushed

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PROMPTED by the recent financial squeeze ailing College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. (CAP), a member of the House of Representatives is planning to file a bill this week seeking the creation of a special body that will serve as an insurance firm for pre-need companies.

Manila representative Jaime Lopez , concurrently the chair of the House committee on banks and financial intermediaries, said he would file a bill setting up Philippine Pre-Need Insurance Corp., which would be patterned after Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC).

"With it, the insurer can be reinsured. Just like PDIC insuring the liabilities of banks," Lopez told reporters.

He added that the bill would supplement moves by Congress to transfer the authority to supervise pre-need companies from the Securities and Exchange Commission to the Insurance Commission.

Lopez said the proposed Philippine Pre-Need Insurance Corp. could look into troubled pre-need firms by examining their books. The body can be composed of representatives from the government and private sectors. A buffer fund, that will cover the pre-need insurance firms' liabilities, will be pooled from contributions of the pre-need firms.

Camarines Sur representative Luis Villafuerte, in the meantime, urged the SEC and the pre-need industry to file their comments to the bill proposing a code governing pre-need firms.

He said the SEC should comment on whether pre-need firms were to be treated as issuer of securities and whether their products were considered securities. This, he said, would determine whether pre-need firms should still be under the supervision of the SEC.

The SEC and the pre-need firms were also asked to give their comments to the proposed increase in paid-up capital for pre-need firms.

He said comments should also be filed on a proposal to prohibit pre-need firms' from investing their trust funds in companies affiliated with shareholders of the pre-need companies.

Villafuerte also strongly expressed his reservations about the treatment of the actuarial reserve liability (ARL) or the present value of a pre-need firm's future obligations matched with the present value of its trust fund. This is also considered as the net liability of a firm to its plan holders.

He said the ARL should be used as a guiding principle for premiums paid, and capitalization and should not be treated as an expense.

CAP first vice president Bobby Cafe, who was present during the hearing, assured the House committee and the SEC that it had provided for P454 million of its P1.2 billion in liabilities to plan holders for the second semester. The second semester ends in March. For the balance, he said CAP would sell some of its assets in its trust fund and draw on a loan from First American Investments.

n. Fra
U. S. Amb
nua

US ENVOY AT AMCHAM MEET
US Ambassador to the Philippines and Palau Francis Ricciardone (right) reiterates his country's support for the US-RP alliance for mutual progress at the recent American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (AmCham) general meeting at Shangri-La Hotel in Makati City. The meeting, presided by AmCham president Rick Santos (left), was also attended by members and officers of the Rotary Club of Makati and Rotary Club of Manila.

Foreign business backs alien ID system

THE JOINT Foreign Chambers of Commerce (JFC) recently urged the government to speed up "the smooth and effective implementation throughout the Philippines" of the new high technology-based system for documenting and identifying foreigners on extended stay in the country recently launched by the Bureau of Immigration (BI).

The system, called Alien Certificate of Registration Identification Card (ACR I-Card), was designed to boost the government's bid to upgrade services to the expatriate community to global standards and stop transnational crimes.

The system uses biometric technology developed by Minnesota-based Identix Corp. It is expected to significantly reduce processing time for alien documentation.

Since the I-Card cannot be faked, it will help tighten the noose on illegal aliens. It is also seen to generate some P1.5 billion for the government in the next 10 years.

The JFC groups the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand Chamber of Commerce, British Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, French Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines, Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Philippines and the Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

In response to the group's call, Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. has ordered the incorporation of the special return certificate, the re-entry permit and the annual report for legal aliens into the ACR I-Card.

Fernandez also ordered the setting up of special processing lanes for ACR I-Card holders at departure and arrival counters at the Naia terminals I and II.

Fernandez also ordered the setting up of modern card readers in VIP lanes for ACR I-Card holders entering or leaving the country via major ports and airports including the two Naia terminals.

The government also assured the foreign chambers that data capturing stations for ACR I-Card applicants were being set up in various parts of the country, including the ports of San Fernando in La Union, Aparri, Subic and Angeles City.

Court orders Maynilad to modify rehab plan

By Christine A. Gaylican

MAYNILAD Water Services Inc. was ordered by the court to file a modified rehabilitation plan that would incorporate the recommendations of designated court receiver Rosario Bernaldo.

Quezon City Regional Trial Court Judge Reynaldo Daway directed Maynilad legal counsels led by lawyer Helena Rosales-Calo to modify Maynilad's rehabilitation plan, which would be the fourth revision of the plan, to include the firm's recent debt settlement arrangements with creditors and the new tariffs approved by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System.

Maynilad was required to submit the modified rehabilitation plan within 20 days from Jan. 31, 2005, when the court issued the order.

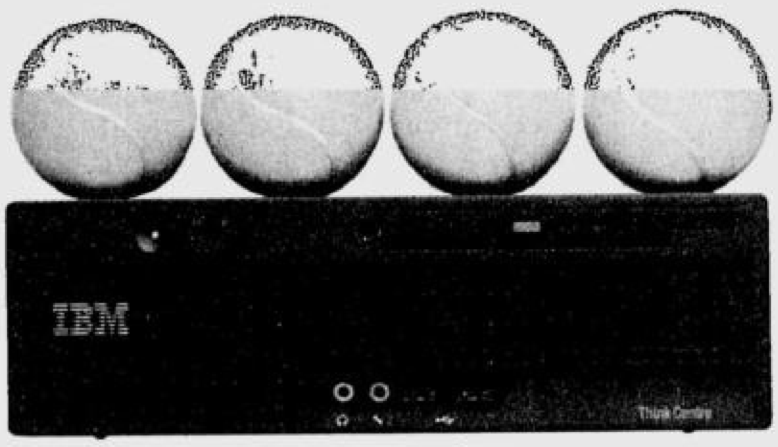
Daway said it was important to incorporate in the plan Maynilad's new arrangements with MWSS, which has P10 billion in exposure in the firm, and the foreign and local creditor-banks. Maynilad owes its creditors about P9 billion, excluding accrued interests as of 2003.

A report of the company's receiver, earlier submitted to the RTC, indicated that some P1.4 billion in obligations to local banks, including Development Bank of the Philippines, Equitable-PCI Bank, Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. and the East-West Bank, would no longer be converted to preferred shares in Maynilad as earlier planned.

Debts to RCBC and DBP will be repaid over nine years from 2005 to 2013.

Equitable-PCI Bank's P100 million exposure in Maynilad will be subjected to an off-set arrangement involving the water concessionaire's current deposits in EPCIBank.

The MWSS will "officially but temporarily" takeover the west concession from the Lopez Group and its French partner Suez Lyonnais des Eaux.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intel inside pentium 4

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2005

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Keeping your workout balanced

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

WE should strive for balance in all aspects of our lives. It is not healthy to have a lopsided life—all work and no recreation time, for example.

Our exercise programs also have to be balanced or we run the risk of being injured, getting bored and wasting our time because the workout is no longer effective.

Here are different ways to have a balanced workout.

Heart and muscles

Imagine your heart as the engine of a car and your muscles and bones the body. A car would not be considered to be in good shape even though the engine was working fine if the doors were falling off.

The opposite is also true—a car with the most attractive paint job and solid structure would still be a lemon if the engine was not running well.

A balanced workout program combines both cardiovascular and muscular strength components.

Strength and flexibility

Many exercisers give little importance to stretching, sometimes even looking at flexibility exercises as a waste of time. Strengthening the muscles while neglecting to stretch them is asking for trouble. It will result in an unbalanced, prone-to-injury body that is overly tight and inflexible.

We once had a male client in the gym who sneaked out without stretching though he was told his tight hamstrings would eventually cause lower back problems. This went on for a few years until one day his lower back went into a tight spasm that needed physical therapy.

We never had to remind him again to stretch. It's sad, but many people have to learn the hard way.

Right and left sides of the body

Fitness writer Suzanne Schlosberg interviewed several experts regarding right-left imbalances. John Blievernicht, president of a rehabilitation clinic in Chicago, claimed just about every athlete he worked with had the imbalance. He said it was also prevalent among fitness enthusiasts.

The experts said if one side of your body was more than 10 percent stronger than the other side, you could cause excessive wear and tear on your joints, muscles and ligaments. They suggested testing yourself by performing exercises one side at a time to see which side was stronger and had better control.

To fix the problem, Tom Purvis, head trainer of the National Academy of Sports Medicine, suggests challenging each side of your body appropriately. Lift the amount of weight you can with your weak side and maintain the original weight on your strong side. Do two sets. Then, do a third set using both sides simultaneously while focusing on making the weak side do its share of the work. Continue this way until both sides even out in strength.

You may find that one side is a lot more flexible than the other. Remedy the situation by stretching more on the tight side (hold the stretches longer and do them more often than in the more flexible side) until both sides become even or almost even.

In terms of being steady on our feet, many people don't realize they have very poor balance on one side compared to the other. If you are right-handed, you will probably be unsteady on your left leg.

Find out which side has less balance by standing on one leg for a minute and count how many times you almost lose your balance or have to touch the floor to steady yourself.

Upper and lower parts of the body

This workout imbalance can lead to an asymmetrical shape, not to mention unbalanced strength. Consider a man who builds muscle mass only in his upper body—he ends up looking like a "lollipop" or "chicken drumstick." Another example is a runner with strong legs but flabby and weak upper body.

Front and back of the body

Exercisers often only focus on what they can see in the mirror (the front part of the body) and forget about what they cannot see (muscles in the back). Too many exercises are done for the front muscles and not enough or no exercise for the muscles behind.

Since muscles work in opposite pairs around a joint, both sets have to be strong and flexible to protect and stabilize the joint.

This doesn't mean that the strength of opposing muscle groups (an example is the quadriceps and hamstrings—front and back of the thighs) has to always be exactly equal. However, each muscle has to be as strong as it can be within its functional limits, otherwise, the joint (in our example, the knee) is not stable and will be prone to injury.

Too much of a good thing

Too much of the same type of exercise can also cause problems because you overstress the same area of the body day after day. A cousin's husband had to be operated on recently for a torn Achilles tendon (a thick cord-like tissue at the heel) caused by using his stepping machine for two hours a day. Cross-training or doing different exercises not only keeps the injuries away but also keeps your workout fresh and exciting.

Activity and rest

Too much exercise can actually be bad for you. Moderate amounts of exercise strengthen the immune system making us less prone to colds and flu. Too much exercise has the opposite effect.

Make sure you balance out your activity and rest periods. But don't rest too much either because, as someone once said, "Too much rest makes us rust!"

* * *

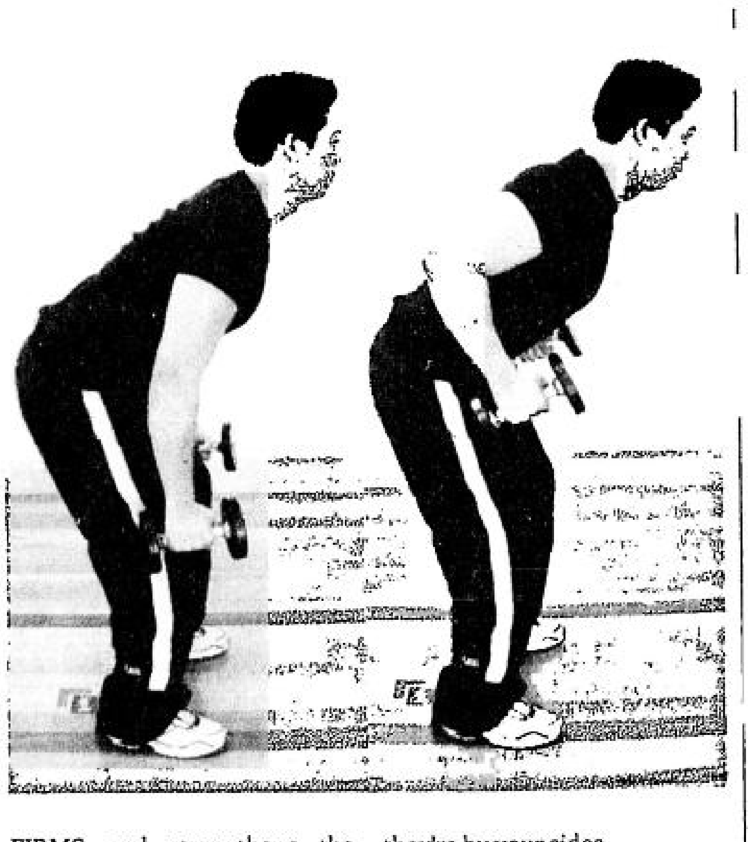
The Association of Fitness Professionals of the Phils. will hold a one-day seminar on Feb. 26 at the University of the Philippines Diliman campus. Topics are The Latest Fitness Trends and Research, Exercise for Menopausal Women, Agility Training for Badminton, Cardio Dance, Latin Aerobics, Yoga Pilates Fusion, and Hip Hop. Call 9202762 or 0917-5181202.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY MISTADES

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

45-degree bent-over narrow row



FIRMS and strengthens the muscles at the sides and middle of your back, back of the shoulders and biceps.

Equipment:

A pair of dumbbells

Exercise technique:

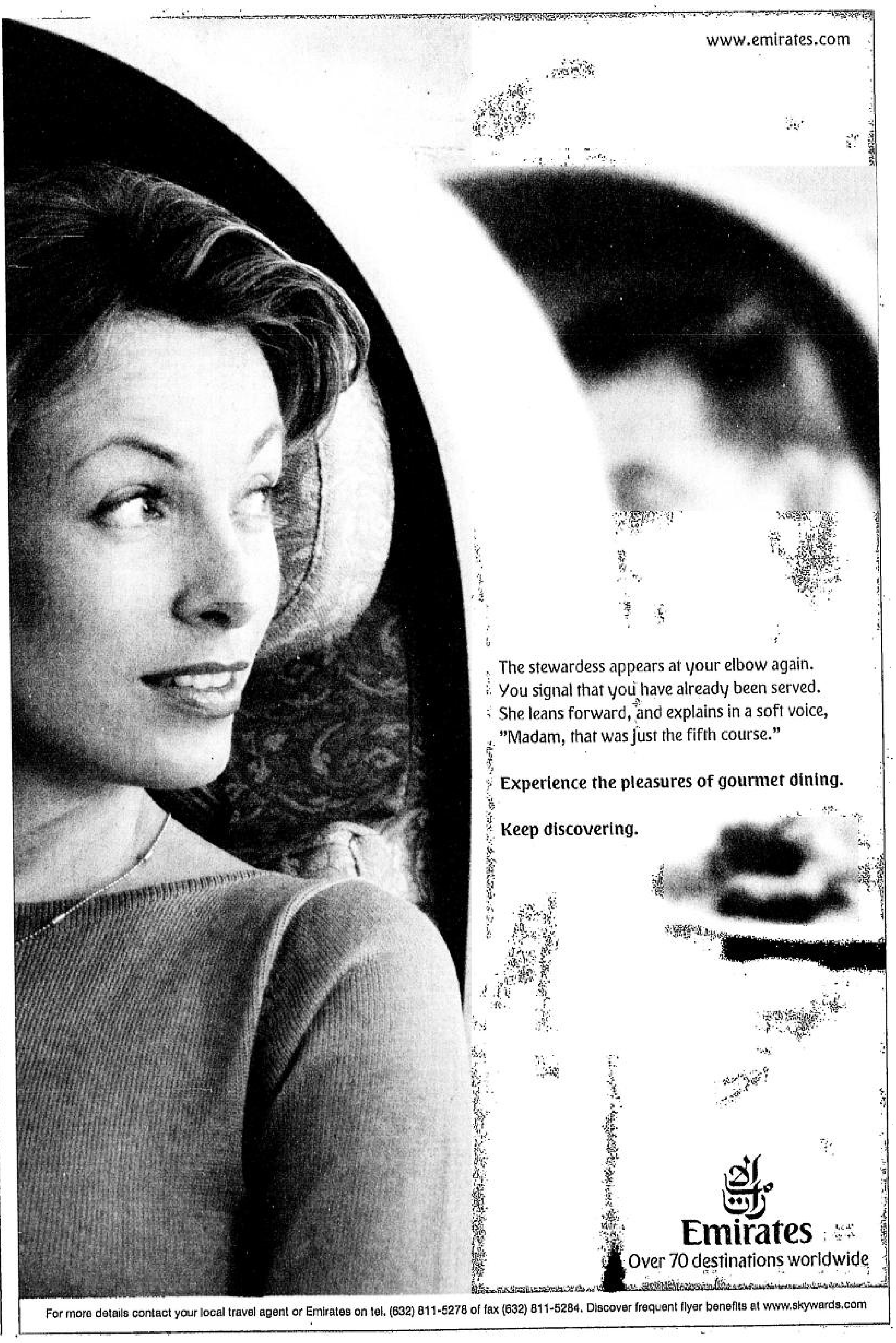
1. Stand with your feet apart a little wider than hip-width.
2. Bend forward from the hips while keeping your back straight and knees slightly bent. Your upper body should be at a 45-degree angle with the floor and your arms should hang down in line with your shoulders.
3. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and maintain that position throughout the entire exercise. This is your starting position.
4. Pull the weights up by leading with your elbows until they're by your sides.
5. Slowly lower the weight back to starting position.
6. Repeat.

Performance tips:

1. This is an advance exercise and should only be done by individuals who have developed sufficient strength to maintain a straight spine with a natural curve in the lower back. A fair amount of flexibility is also needed in the hamstrings or back of the thighs.
2. It is very important to keep the shoulder blades squeezed together throughout the entire exercise, otherwise the back will be rounded.
3. Exhale as you pull your elbows backward; inhale as you return to starting position.

Repetitions:

Do 12-15 repetitions.



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BRITISH rock singer Gordon Sumner, better known as "Sting"

HONG Kong heiress Christine Loh with her friend, super fun businessman Craig Ehrlich

BUSINESS magnate Buddy Roa with wife Ruby Diaz, international polo player Iñigo Zobel and Metropolitan Museum's hotshot southern gent Ino Manalo

POPULAR couple Bito Mantecon and wife, vivacious Menchi Gonzales

BEAUTIFUL people: businessman and top singer Johnny Velasquez with his love, Maripi Muscat, with Nicole Ortega and American beauty Debbie Yabut

WAITING for the concert to start: Maripi Muscat and brilliant lawyer Liza Araneta Marcos

ZOBEL beauties: Maricris Zobel with daughters Bianca, Paula and Natalia, plus Bianca Z.'s steady, Hong Kong-based David Jacob

Breathless in Hong Kong

SUPER pals: Benito "Bomboy" Araneta and wife, beautiful Baby Serrano, with Irene Marcos and husband Greggy Araneta

LET the concert begin. Gorgeous beauty Carol Masibay G. with close pals Rosanna Tuason and her husband, southern personality Joe Fores

SUPER Sting fans: witty Al Tengco and his wife, classic beauty Carla Reyes, with ace photographer Alex Van Hagen, in front of the camera for a change

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak EasyShare** SYSTEM

GETTING away from the hassle-dazzle of Cosmo Manille can be exciting. Jetting off to Hong Kong to watch a concert is an even bigger thrill.

Naturellement, the way to enjoy Hong Kong is to know where and when the action happens. Yes, *palanggas*, there are tons of fun to experience and discover in this glitzy city of skyscrapers and colorful lights.

The concert we were all excited about was by none other than that world-class master jammer, ex-teacher, ex-lead singer of the popular band The Police, and highly acclaimed composer, actor and die-hard environmental activist, Sting. He was performing in Hong Kong to promote his latest solo album "Sacred Love."

Manille's young hip, and young-at-heart set wasted no time grabbing tickets for this brilliant singer-composer's one night performance.

Our gang's mega organizer was hotshot multi-faceted business entrepreneur, fun, smart and witty **Al Tengco**. He personally made the arrangements with his business associates in Hong Kong.

Service with a smile

We couldn't wait to enjoy the comfy wide seats of our pal, Philippine Airlines. The one-hour 35-minute trip seemed so much shorter because of the excellent service from the crew that always had a smile for the passengers.

The trip was made even more enjoyable because half the crew were those Southern personas of charm, my fellow Ilonggos from Bacolod and Iloilo, no less.

Most of the group took the 8 a.m. flight so as not to waste the day but ace photographer **Alex V.H.**, **Choy Cojuangco** and his wife, **Marissa Echauz**, **Irene Marcos** and her husband, **Greggy Araneta**, **Bito** and **Menchu Mantecon** were on the 3:50 p.m. flight. Arriving on the 8 p.m. flight from Manille was architect **Anton Mendoza** and his soulmate, good-looking model **Marc San Diego**.

Upon our arrival, Shangri-La's efficient personnel whisked **Alex Van Hagen** and *moi* off in their Mercedez limo to our hotel where we were welcomed like celebs. A personal touch that the eye-catching Kowloon Shangri-La does for its clients, dahlings.

Since we were in HK a day before the concert, Al Tengco organized a scrumptious dinner for all 18 of us at 8:30 p.m. in the famous Chinese restaurant called Lei Garden on the 1/F of the CNT Tower in Wan Shai.

Party time

After dinner it was "let's party" time at the lobby of the Conrad Hotel where most of the gang stayed. The others were at the Kowloon Shangri-La and the Ritz Carlton.

No sooner than you could bat an eyelash, **Iñigo** and **Maricris Zobel** breezed in with glam gal **Carol Garci**, **Al** and **Carl Tengo**, **Johnny Velasquez** and **Maripi Muscat**, **Debbie Yabut** and **Nicole Ortega**, **Ruby** and **Buddy Roa**, **Greggy** and **Irene Araneta**, and lawyer **Perry Pe** without his wife, my *palangga*, **Robina Gokongwei**, "who was not feeling too well", Perry explained to *moi*.

Then, **Concoy Tuason** and wife, ultra-glam **Doodi Menchaca**, with their sons, ace underwater photographer **Gutzy**, with **Sev** and **Daniel** both vacationing from studies in Australia; and fun **Lexi Tuason**, showed up for a late-late night cap and to wish Maricris and Iñigo Zobel a happy, happy silver wedding anniversary.

Horrendous experience

The following day, *après* a quick snack at the Grand Hyatt mezzanine, many of us dashed off to the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center with empty stomachs since the service at the mezzanine of the Hyatt was horrendous. The Tiffin Bar's manager even raised his voice with one of the gals in our group who asked why it was taking almost an hour for our sandwiches, soup and water, to arrive, would you believe?

Anyway, I couldn't believe the jam-packed audience of 10,000 or probably more at the concert venue. And believe me not a single person was disappointed with the show.

On his second song, Sting had the whole center on its feet, clapping, yelling, howling, singing and dancing.

Backed up by two Afro-English gals with powerful voices and his fab six-piece band, Sting showed us his magnetism as a singer and brilliant songwriter and why he has been a mega performer for 30 years.

Sting started the show with "Send Your Love", which was inspired by the 9/11 tragedy. Then he really got on the roll, getting the audience on its feet, clapping and dancing to hip rocking tunes like "Fragile," "Field Of Gold," "Magic," "Roxanne," "Englishman in New York" and, one of my favorites "Desert Rose."

Scene stealer

When he did his hot Grammy-winning song "Whenever I Say Your Name," singing it with the fabulous Joy Rose (one of his backup singers) who has a mind-boggling, powerful voice, the 10,000-strong audience went almost berserk. In fact, there were times you couldn't hear her with the applause, whistles and howls of appreciation of the concert mob, dahlings.

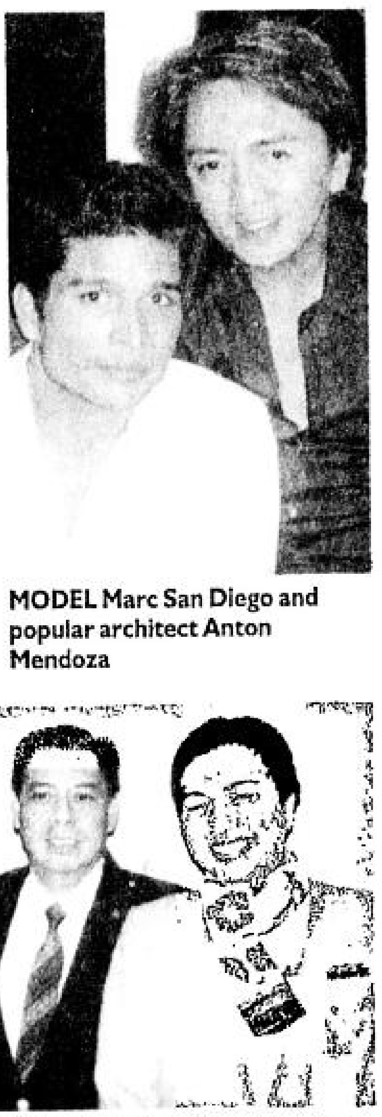
The review of the show in the South China Morning Post put it beautifully: "Joy Rose brought the superstar to his knees, literally."

After two hours and 20 minutes doing 14 of his songs, Sting was back on stage for not one, but two more encores, to the delight of the ecstatic crowd. He did the number one smash hit, "Every Breath You Take," leaving the 10,000 or more of us fans completely breathless. "An Evening with Sting" was an unforgettable, memorable, one-of-a-kind experience, dahlings.

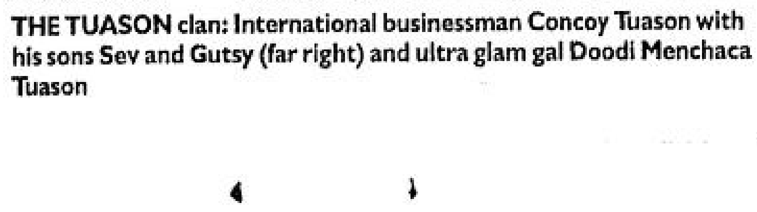
Cool.

SULTRY beauty Benjie Diaz Deverall and in-demand lawyer Perry Pe

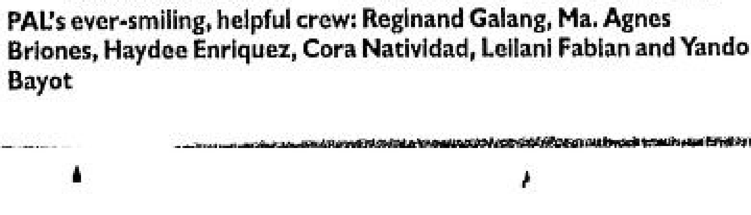
MULTI-FACETED businessman Choy Cojuangco and wife Marissa Echauz



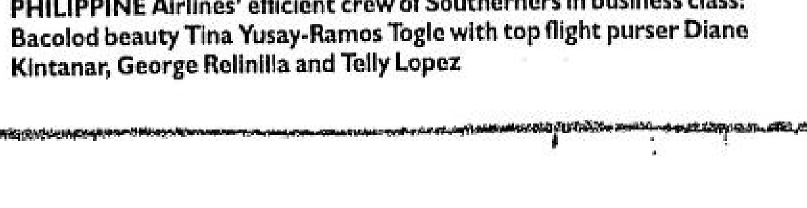
MODEL Marc San Diego and popular architect Anton Mendoza



THE TUASON clan: International businessman Concoy Tuason with his sons Sev and Gutsy (far right) and ultra glam gal Doodi Menchaca Tuason



PAL's ever-smiling, helpful crew: Reginand Galang, Ma. Agnes Briones, Haydee Enriquez, Cora Natividad, Leilani Fabian and Yando Bayot



PHILIPPINE Airlines' efficient crew of Southerners in business class: Bacolod beauty Tina Yusay-Ramos Togle with top flight purser Diane Kintanar, George Relinilla and Telly Lopez

Summer is time for learning Filipino legends

BROTHERS Jericho and Jarod Hubalde show parents and their toddlers how to play volleyball.

THE LITTLE Gym's summer classes for 2005 will revolve around the theme, "Alamat Filipino: Through Motor Development, Music and Fun".

It will be a celebration of popular Filipino legends. Children of different ages will learn gymnastics, dance, sports and movements.

Kids and parents alike will learn the charming and amusing stories behind animals, fruits, places and other things as they execute fun movements together.

As they discover The Legend of the Chocolate Hills, they will learn forward rolls and somersaults down an inclined mat. They will explore The Legend of the Bamboo by learning various bends and stretches of different muscles such as basic gymnastic body positions. They will be trained in flexibility, like the bamboo moving with the wind, trying out several gymnastic skills such as straddle splits.

They get to act out The Legend of the Adarna Bird through creative movement challenges with music from warm-up to group movement activities.

The Little Gym summer program will be held for ten weeks, March 13-May 21. A 10 percent discount for tuition and membership fees will be available to those who will register not later than Feb. 27. Call The Little Gym branches at Alabang (8504060), Makati (8151735), Pasig-Mandaluyong (6372463) and East Quezon City (9299013).

A YOUNGSTER shows how hard she can kick a soccer ball.

Dutch expert holds workshops on aquatic therapy

A SERIES of workshops to help children and adults with disabilities attain functional independence through aquatic therapy techniques will be conducted this month.

Johan Lambeck, who headed the Department of Aquatic Therapy at Nijmegen, Netherlands for 19 years, will train Filipino physical, occupational and speech therapists. Aquatic therapy supposedly helps patients recover their movements quicker than traditional land-based therapy techniques. Lambeck will also talk to parents of children with Down Syndrome to explain how aquatic therapy can help their children.

Aquatic therapy techniques have long been used to hasten the healing of people undergoing rehabilitation. Its main purpose is to help people with disability function independently as quickly as possible.

When used properly, aquatic therapy techniques can help people who have suffered from a stroke, spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, low back pain, knee injuries and other orthopedic and neurologic conditions. Children with cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, autism, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders, mental retardation and other developmental delays also benefit when aquatic therapy techniques are incorporated into the treatment process by appropriately trained professionals.

Lambeck will hold a one-day introductory course for students and professionals. It will tackle fluid mechanics, the benefits of treating in the water and appropriate handling techniques for a variety of conditions.

A three-day workshop about the Halliwick technique, used to help children with developmental delays learn how to swim, will follow.

Lastly, a two-day workshop on preventing and rehabilitating falls by the elderly by helping them maintain their balance, coordination and strength will be held.

Each course involves extensive hands-on training in the swimming pool with Lambeck.

The Dutch physical therapist will be in the Philippines for one week this month to conduct the workshops. Lambeck, named the USA Aquatic Therapy Professional of the year in 1998, is the author of four books and 20 articles on aquatic therapy. Since 1983, he has taught over 600 aquatic therapy seminars in 27 countries. He was also the secretary of the Bobath Association of the Netherlands for over 10 years.

Call Therapy Works at 8530121, 8530358 or 0917-8938926 for more details.

Tribals trained in health care

THIRTY members of 22 tribal communities from all over the country have been trained at the Our Lady of Peace Hospital to become community health workers or barefoot doctors.

Those who completed the three-week long seminar conducted by Ramon Magsaysay Award winner Sister Eva Fidela Maamo, SPC, came from minority groups like B'laan from Polomolok; Kongking from Southern Leyte; Talaandig from Miarayon, Bukidnon; Mamanwa from Southern Leyte; Tadyawan from Mindoro; Bagobo from Davao; Sama from Zamboanga City; Kalibugan from Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte; Subanon from Zamboanga; Muslim from Surallah, South Cotabato; Escaya from Bohol; Kankana-ey and Ibaloi from Baguio; Aeta from Subic, Zambales; Manobo from Cotabato; Yakan from Lamitan, Basilan; Kalagan from Sarangani Province; and T'boli from South Cotabato.

Participants were given free transportation from their remote hometowns to attend the seminar that gave them the basic skills they would need to attend to the primary health care of their communities.

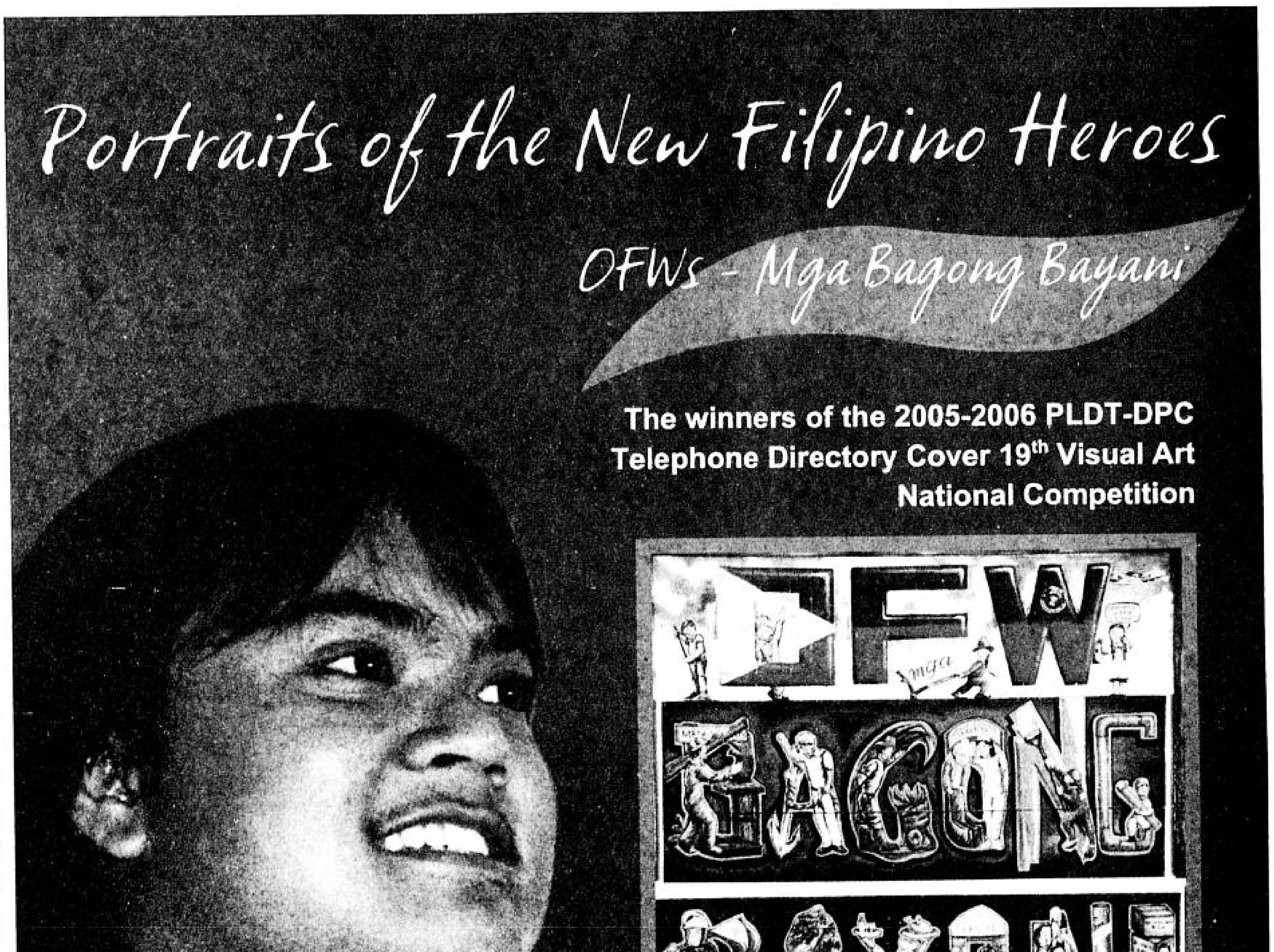
The training was conducted at the hospital for the poor, along the Coastal Road.

Fr. James B. Reuter, SJ, is chair of the Foundation of the Our Lady of Peace Missions, Inc. Sr. Maamo, FOLPMI president, pioneered in training the T'bolis of Lake Sebu, Surallah, South Cotabato as barefoot doctors.

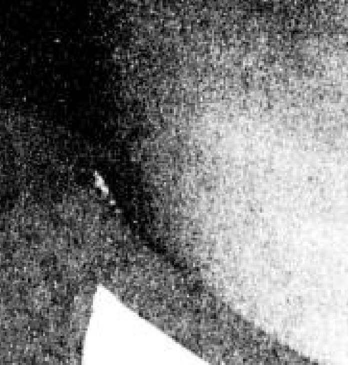
Portraits of the New Filipino Heroes

OFWs - Mga Bagong Bayani

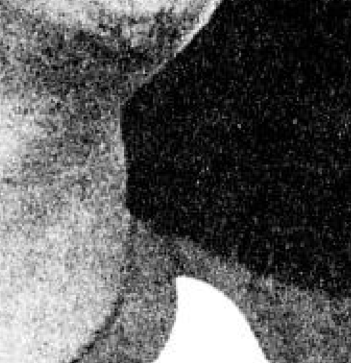
The winners of the 2005-2006 PLDT-DPC Telephone Directory Cover 19th Visual Art National Competition



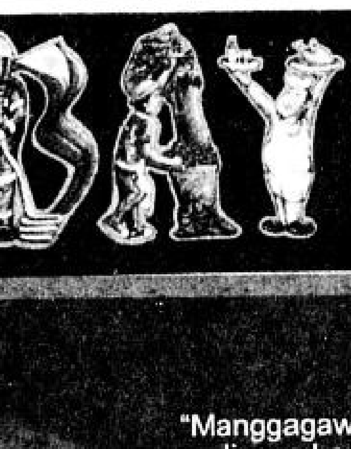
GRAND PRIZE
JERMAINE W. ALVAREZ
Far Eastern University
"Manggagawang Pinoy: Pinagbuklod ng Iisang Layunin, kaya't Tawagin Natin Silang mga Bagong Bayani"
29" x 29"
Acrylic on Wood



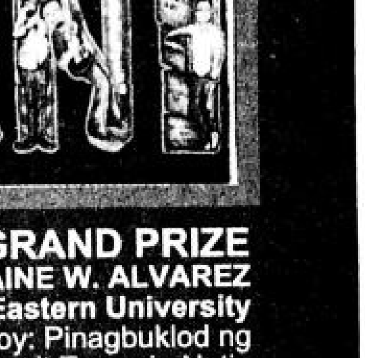
2nd Prize
JUDEO R. HERRERA
Tarlac State University
"Transcendental Value of Love"
24" x 30"
Mixed Media



3rd Prize
REDENTOR L. CASTILLO, JR.
University of Northern Philippines – Vigan
"Pagbabalik ng mga Bagong Bayani, Dala ay Kaginhawaan sa Sariling Lahi"
29" x 29"
Acrylic on Canvas



4th Prize
REX D. AGUILAR
University of the East – Kalookan
"Kilala Ko Sila"
24" x 30"
Japanese Paper



5th Prize
DAVID JOEL R. QUINDOY
E.A.R.I.S.T.
"Flight of the Modern Heroes"
24" x 30"
Mixed Media

HONORABLE MENTIONS:
1st Honorable Mention: GERALD B. MUNGCAL, Tarlac State University, "Unsung Heroes," 24" x 30," Acrylic on Canvas
2nd Honorable Mention: BUEN J. ABRIGO, University of the Philippines, Diliman, "Mga Bayani...(from Left to Right, Top)," 29" x 29," Mixed Media
3rd Honorable Mention: HARI MARTIN G. LUALHATI, University of the Philippines, Diliman, "Halaga ng Bagong Bayani," 29" x 29," Oil on Canvas

The Overseas Filipino Workers, our new heroes. Instrumental in keeping our country up in these trying times. They are this year's theme for the PLDT-DPC 19th Visual Art National Competition as interpreted by 64 student artists from around the country, with five emerging as the top winners. Their winning masterpieces will be featured on the covers of the 2005-2006 PLDT-DPC Telephone Directories.

The entries will be on exhibit at the National Museum, Ground Floor, Museum of the Filipino People, Agrifina Circle, Rizal Park, Manila from February 3 to 27, 2005, Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 am to 4 pm.

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Naughty and nice bubble bars

TWO TIMING TART
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LUSH introduces a new bubble bar inspired by the fields of Provence from where it imports lavender.

A French Kiss (P295) is a pretty little purple twist of a bubble bar slice, containing lashings of lavender oil, lavender absolute and even a delicate sprig of lavender on top. There is also a hint of rosemary and thyme both of which are widely used Mediterranean herbs and stimulants and antidepressants, making for a relaxing, balancing soak.

Also new in-store and equally summery, is the Blackberry Bath Bomb ballistic (P225). This explosive little number is deliciously fruit scented. Not only does it have a little bomb fuse to decorate, the fragrance is a fusion of bergamot and frankincense to calm and act as a tonic for the skin.

Two Timing Tart (P195) is a naughty new bubble bar slice that combines coconut cream, geranium oil and erotic jasmine absolute, which has long been used in love potions for its aphrodisiac qualities.

Hot Milk? Bubble Bar Slice (Php 175.00) in the colour of sunset is as comforting as a mug of hot milk before bedtime. It contains creamy coconut milk and sensuous patchouli oil, both of which have excellent benefits for dry skin.

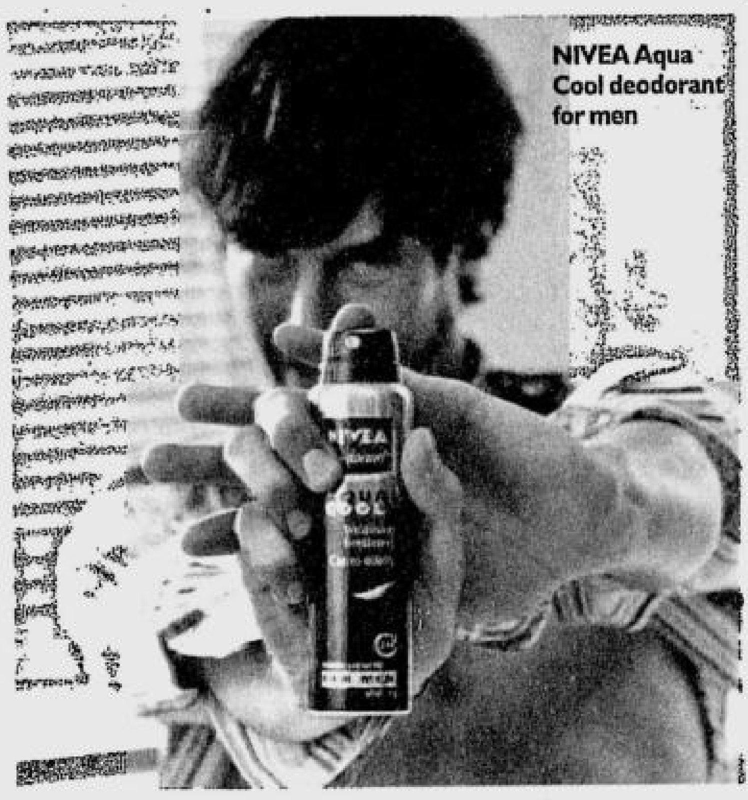
Lush is exclusively distributed by Stores Specialists, Inc. Lush boutiques are located at Glorietta 4, Power Plant Mall, Shangri-La Mall and Greenbelt 3. Visit online at www.lush.com.ph

Freshness for the active man

NIVEA, the world's No. 1 skincare brand, introduces Nivea Deo Aqua Cool.

The new deodorant provides men with much-needed deodorant protection while leaving a feeling of freshness. It uses a unique "Cool-Care" formulation especially designed for the active man. The deodorant formulation stimulates the senses with its invigoratingly cool masculine scent.

Nivea Deo Aqua Cool is tested by dermatologists to be safe on skin, with no alcohol, colorants and other skin irritants. The strong-action anti-perspirant protects against underarm wetness and unpleasant odors 24 hours a day. It comes in three application variants to answer every man's needs: Spray, roll-on and stick.



NIVEA Aqua Cool deodorant for men

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When you get home, set a poured candle to relaxing music, slip into a Rosewater-scented bath and finish off with a generous lathering of Body Lotion to rub away the cares of the day.

Crabtree & Evelyn also offers fragrance inspired by the seasonal scent of classic English flowers—Wisteria, Lily of the Valley, Freesia and Evelyn Rose.

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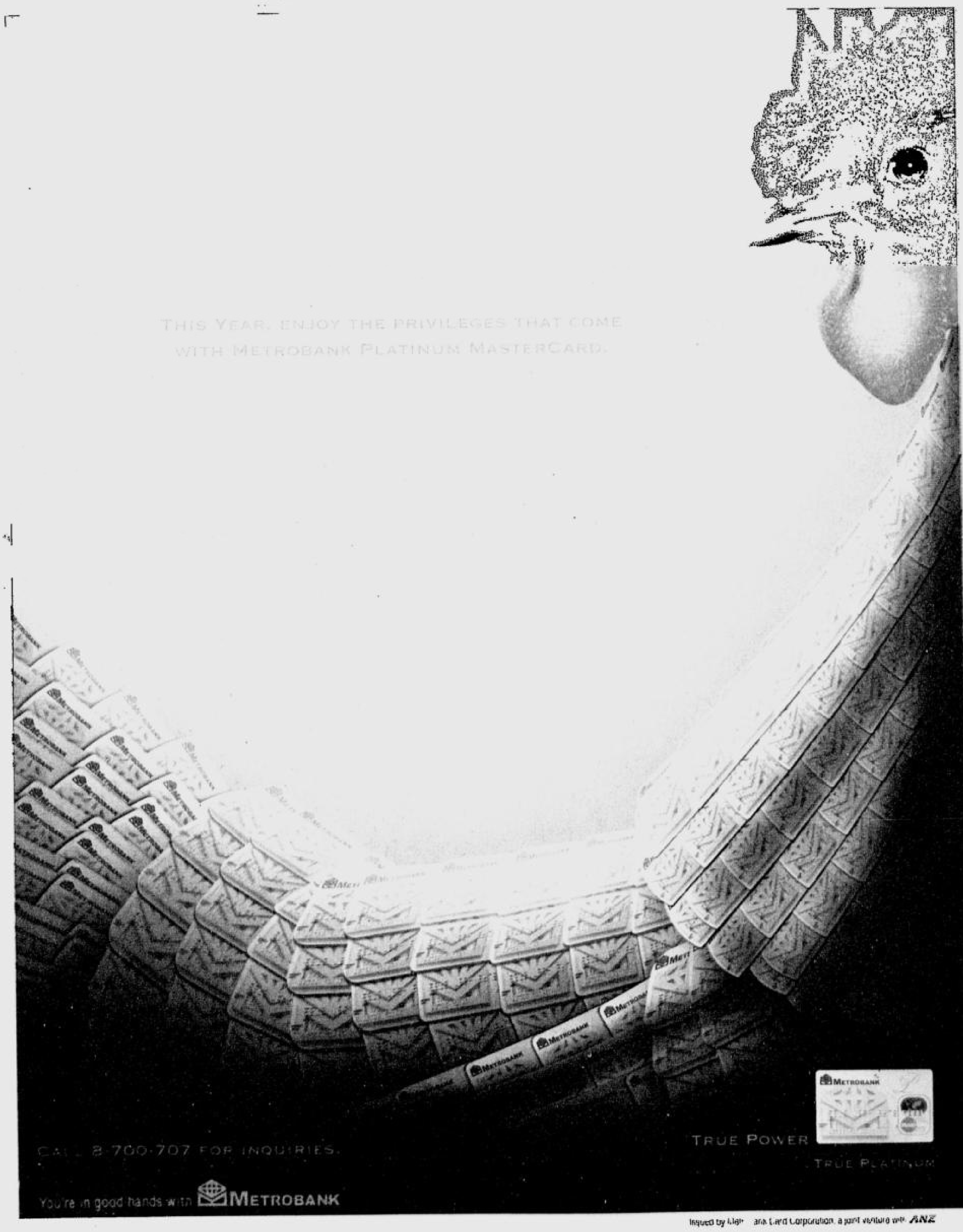
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GOOD EATING
stephB.

Care for your 'inner ecology'

"Proper nutrition can cure better than any medicine."—inspired by Hippocrates, Father of Medicine

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

THE INSUFFICIENCY of a nutrient in our body can cause disease. In fact, Dr. Francisco Contreras, in his book "Health in the 21st Century," says "the lack of a single nutrient can (even) cause death."

Ecology of the body

It's not only the outside environment that should concern us but also our internal ecology. Constantly bombarded by a failing environment due to air and food pollution, we are faced with a challenge—how to maintain good health for as long as we can.

We have to turn inward because "the internal ecology of our body determines our health."

Good food=good health

Nutrition as a science began 160 years after a man called James Lind discovered in 1750 that foods had functions. Not only did food satisfy hunger, it also could prevent and cure disease. Study mariners with scurvy, he prescribed citrus fruits like oranges and lemons. Those who ate the fruits recovered in six days.

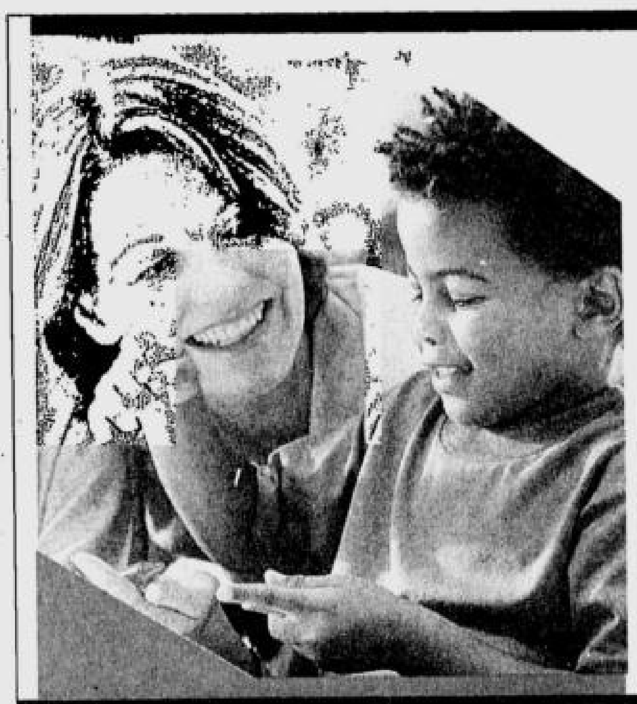
Dr. Casimir Funk invented the term "vitamin" when he discovered thiamin in 1912. It was because of him that the cure for beriberi was found.

Until today, major studies in the field of nutrition are finding cures for diabetes, obesity, alcoholism, mental illness and cancer.

Nutrition researcher Gladys Block, PhD, University of California, did an analysis to determine if there was a connection between cancer and diet. Out of 99 studies, 89 showed that a connection existed. The results also showed fruits and vegetables were the "first line of defense" against many types of cancer.

Vitamin C and bioflavonoids (found in berries, cantaloupe, green leafy veggies and citrus fruits) strengthen the body's immune system against cancer of the cervix, stomach

CARE/D3



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ATHLETES in elementary, high school and college levels from all over the Philippines are expected to participate in the 2nd Monsour Boracay Tae kwon do Challenge.

Lights, camera, hard-kicking action

TAE KWON DO Olympian and world champion Monsour del Rosario hosts the Boracay championships.

MONSOUR del Rosario, tae kwon do Olympian and world champion, will host the second Monsour Boracay Tae kwon do Challenge Feb. 18-20, a nationwide tournament to be held in the beachfront of the Pearl of the Pacific Resort in Boracay.

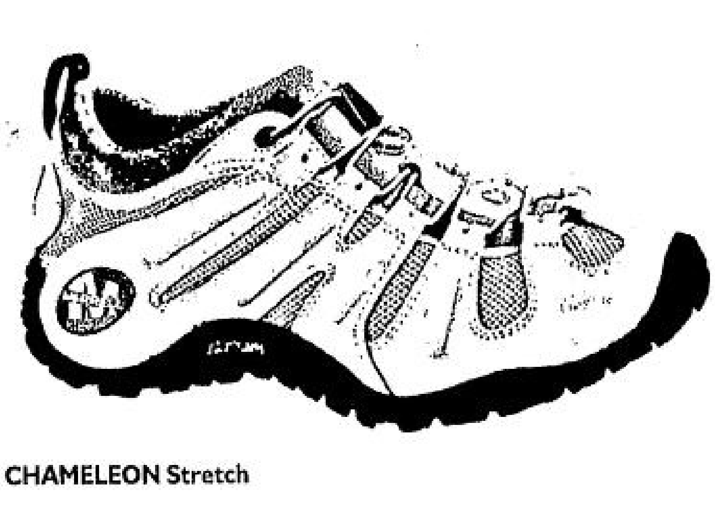
The event will include a free tae kwon do clinic every morning to be facilitated by the Philippine National Team coaches, Philippine Olympic Team coaches, Philippine National Demonstration team and Del Rosario himself. Actual tournament events will be held in the afternoon with athletes in elementary, high school and college levels participating. Contestants will come from Pampanga, Iloilo, Zamboanga, Cagayan de Oro, Bacolod, Cebu, Bulacan and Manila, among others.

The event aims to increase awareness of tae kwon do and to encourage the youth to participate in the sport.

Boracay, venue of the tournament, now has its own Philippine Tae kwon do Association recognized school after the successful staging of the first tournament last year.

THE ANNUAL competition aims to encourage the youth to participate in tae kwon do.

Technology and comfort in sporty footwear



CHAMELEON Stretch

HIGH Tide

OVER time, the concept of "outdoor" has broadened to include all types of activities and environments, whether natural and urban. Merrell is driven to keep pace with this evolution.

The original Merrells were handmade by Randy Merrell, a maker of custom cowboy boots in Vernal, Utah, more than 20 years ago. In 1997, Wolverine World Wide, makers of a number of international footwear brands, recognized the high quality of Merrell shoes and bought the brand.

In 2001, the brand was introduced to the Philippine market. But even before it was brought to local shores, the original Merrell line of hiking boots has expanded to offer multi-sports and after-sports footwear as well as sandals—all featuring cutting-edge technology that makes Merrell shoes the best choice for activities like hiking, long-distance cycling, and rough terrain trekking.

Investing in innovative technologies and exclusive materials is an essential Merrell principle. The brand offers its patented Air Cushion midsole, which absorbs shock and adds stability. The technology allows the shoe to absorb shock up to four times the body's weight for support and comfort. Thus, it allows maximum support for serious mountaineers who climb any time of the year.

Another exclusive Merrell technology is Q-Form. It combines properly sequenced cushioning with a supportive and naturally aligning midsole to create technology that is 100-percent tailored to women and the way they move.

The technology alleviates discomfort and reduces the wear and tear on shoes, making them last longer. Q-Form is used in all Merrell shoes in the ladies' category, including the multi-sport (equivalent of cross trainers) shoes that women use for aerobics and brisk walking.

Another notable technology that Merrell uses is the Microban product protection. Microban inhibits the growth of bacteria, mold and mildew that gives shoes odor and stains. Similar to this is the Serdia (by Clarino), a lining that absorbs and neutralizes footwear odors.

Both are part of the after-sport and sandals categories for people who prefer to allow their feet to "breathe" after activities like badminton, bowling and swimming.

CHASE

HELIUM Ventilator

Horse show jumping championships Feb. 19

THE KAMISETA Cup 2005 will be held at the Manila Polo Club on Feb. 19.

This event, the second to be held, is one of the biggest and most exciting horse show jumping championships of the year. Seasoned and amateur riders are participating in the 1.25, 1.15, 1.05, 0.90 meter jumps.

A Team Relay Event and Puissance will round off the competitions that will begin at 12:30 p.m.

Winners in the Kamiseta Cup 2004 were Isabella Escaño, class 0.80 m; Alexis Cortes, class 1.00 m; Danni Virata, class 1.10 m; and Joker Arroyo, class 1.20 m. Champions of the Low Grade and High Grade Top Score were Carmen Silverio and Vic Barba, respectively.

Asian Games gold medalist Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski and Olympian Toni Leviste showed their talents in a six-bar exhibition match.

David Reynolds, the polo and equestrian director, said they hoped this year's event would be just as successful as last year's.

He said Kamiseta was putting up very generous prize money to encourage participants to train as hard as possible to prepare for the event.

Kamiseta president Gunn Roque said the Filipino equestrian could be competitive internationally as shown by Jaworski and Leviste. The tournament hoped to contribute in developing young Filipinos to become world-class athletes.

Call the Manila Polo Club at 8177493.

UST holds course on clinical practice

PHYSICIANS and paramedical personnel are invited to the UST Department of Medicine's 27th post-graduate course titled "Clinical Problem Solving: Putting Principles into Practice" from Feb. 9 -11.

The scientific forum will gather the country's top clinicians and medical experts at the university's Thomas Aquinas Research Center on España, Manila.

They will present comprehensive approaches to common medical conditions based on updated international and local guidelines.

Topics include ways of dealing with patients with bleeding disorders and breast mass, biological treatment options for patients with rheumatic disorders, updates on urinary tract infection and community-acquired pneumonia in immunocompetent adults, and guidelines on tuberculosis and updates on obstructive lung diseases.

The St. Thomas Aquinas Research Complex is UST's grand showcase of researches in the medical, natural and chemical sciences, as well as in the social, philosophical and theological sciences. It houses under one roof all of UST's research centers.

Call 7494012 or 7407485.

Yoga retreat on Boracay

MANDALA Spa on Boracay will hold a yoga retreat on Feb. 18-20, with teachers Mo-ching Yip and Louise Ravelo.

Yip, a yoga practitioner for 15 years, has been teaching for four years. Ravelo has an advanced teacher's training degree from yoga masters in India.

The practice of yoga helps improve health and physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

The Yoga Holiday Retreat leaves ample free time to enjoy Boracay's famous white sand beach.

For inquiries and booking reservations, log on to www.mandalaspa.com or call (6336) 2885858.

Care for your 'inner ecology'

From page D1

and esophagus.

The United States National Cancer Institute has drawn up a cancer prevention guideline that suggests, among others, the eating of five generous servings of fruits and vegetables daily.

A 10-year study by T. Harayama of 265,118 subjects revealed that people with a food regimen high in vegetables (especially those containing betacarotene) lowered their risk of contracting lung, stomach or prostate cancer.

Balanced nutrition

Some macronutrients come from proteins, carbohydrates and fats.

Carbohydrates are the main sources of energy because they are easily metabolized by the body. They come from vegetables (potatoes, green leafy veggies, apples, barley, coconuts, bananas, tomatoes, corn wheat, mangoes, sunflower seeds).

Proteins regulate energy production, building of tissue and fighting of disease. The easiest proteins to metabolize are found grains—wheat, corn, rice, beans, lentils, etc. Protein from beef, pork, fish and chicken are not easily processed by the body "due to the complexity of their molecules... only a small part of them can bring benefit to the body while the remainder remains as harmful waste."

Amino acids are basic building blocks of protein and help in the formation of muscle cells, antibodies, among others. However, to boost health, take amino acids in the form of sprouts with alfalfa at the top of the list.

Fats are essential to healthy living as they contain twice the energy of carbohydrates. However, people tend to overload on them. The recommended dosage is not more than two tablespoons a day (includes oils and butter used in cooking). Saturated fat includes pork fat, beef tallow, poultry eggs, milk products. Unsaturated fat comes from olive oil, corn, soy, peanut and cottonseed oils.

Micronutrients are necessary for balanced nutrition. This means there may be a need for vitamins and minerals supplements. While there is still some controversy over the need for supplements, many doctors have started to prescribe them.

How to get nutrients into the body

- Chew food properly, allowing it more time to mix with saliva. Digestion begins in the mouth. Take your time eating a meal. Don't rush.
- Enjoy mealtimes. Do not eat while stressed. Relax before eating. Take a deep breath. Release your breath slowly. Think happy thoughts (imagine you are embraced by a cloud, or a soft blue light/smile).
- Do not mix liquids with your meals because they interfere with digestion especially if they are too cold or too hot. Take a small glass of water before or after a meal, not during. Water should ideally be consumed in between meals.
- Do not overeat. Overloading your stomach will interfere with proper digestion.
- Make time for excretion. Defecation is a very vital function needed for health. Don't postpone the "urge to go" and wait for a more convenient time. This causes constipation.
- Include nutrition supplements. Take your multivitamin/ mineral daily after a full meal.
- If you have digestive problems, consider taking enzymes. Better yet, consult your physicians.

Juice up (upper)

Open your refrigerator and look for greens/fruits lying around—green pepper, lettuce, *ampalaya*, carrot, apples. Mix in blender. Drink up!

Love and light!

Thanks to Dr. Omar Arabia for lending me his books.

Discover something new
each and every day in Hong Kong

Catch it all right here in Hong Kong from now till May 2005. Immerse yourself in the lively arts and culture scene-with the arts festival, film festival, music festivals, concerts, and plays galore. And if you're into sports, get ready for some of the biggest sporting events of the year! Come and experience it all in Hong Kong!

Hong Kong Arts Festival 2005

Rugby World Cup Sevens 2005

Spartacus By Hong Kong Ballet 2005

The Bee Gees' Broadway & West End Hit Musical - Saturday Night Fever

MARCH

17 February - 20 March 2005
2005 HONG KONG ARTS FESTIVAL
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11-20 March 2005
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Watch your favourite teams compete in the premier tournament of the International Rugby Board's World Sevens Series.

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22 March - 6 April 2005
THE 29th HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
Almost 300 international films to choose from, featuring everything from award-winning movies to avant garde and indie flicks.

25 - 27 March 2005
SPARTACUS BY HONG KONG BALLET
Choreographed and arranged by Irek Mukhamedov, one of Bolshoi Ballet's leading dancers, this new-classical ballet is based on two themes - one of love, and one of strife.

27 March 2005
HONG KONG MARATHON
Every year the Hong Kong Marathon attracts participants from as far as Japan, US, Germany, Zimbabwe, and the UK. Whether you join in or watch, it's bound to be an event to remember.

25 March - 1 May 2005
A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY
Connie Chan Po Chu returns to centre stage with another rendering of "A Sentimental Journey" - a production that revolves around the development of the Sin Fung Ming Opera Troupe.

APRIL

22, 23, 26, 27, 29 & 30 April 2005
"GISELLE" BY HONG KONG BALLET

24 April 2005
QUEEN ELIZABETH II CUP (HORSE RACING)

MAY

1 May 2005
TIN HAU FESTIVAL
Celebrated on the 23rd day of the third month of the lunar calendar, this colourful festival is celebrated by Hong Kong fishermen in honor of Tin Hau, the goddess of the sea.

15 May 2005
CHEUNG CHAU BUN FESTIVAL
The centerpiece of the festival is a trio of 16-metre high towers of pink-and-white buns. The highlight is a procession of child performers dressed as ancient gods and heroes. Marvel at how they are suspended by an intricate system of hidden rods and wires.

From 20 May 2005
THE BEE GEES' BROADWAY & WEST END HIT MUSICAL - SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER
Saturday Night Fever comes alive on the Hong Kong stage with this two-and-a-half-hour dance marathon production featuring the classic and brilliant disco soundtrack by the Bee Gees!

29 May 2005
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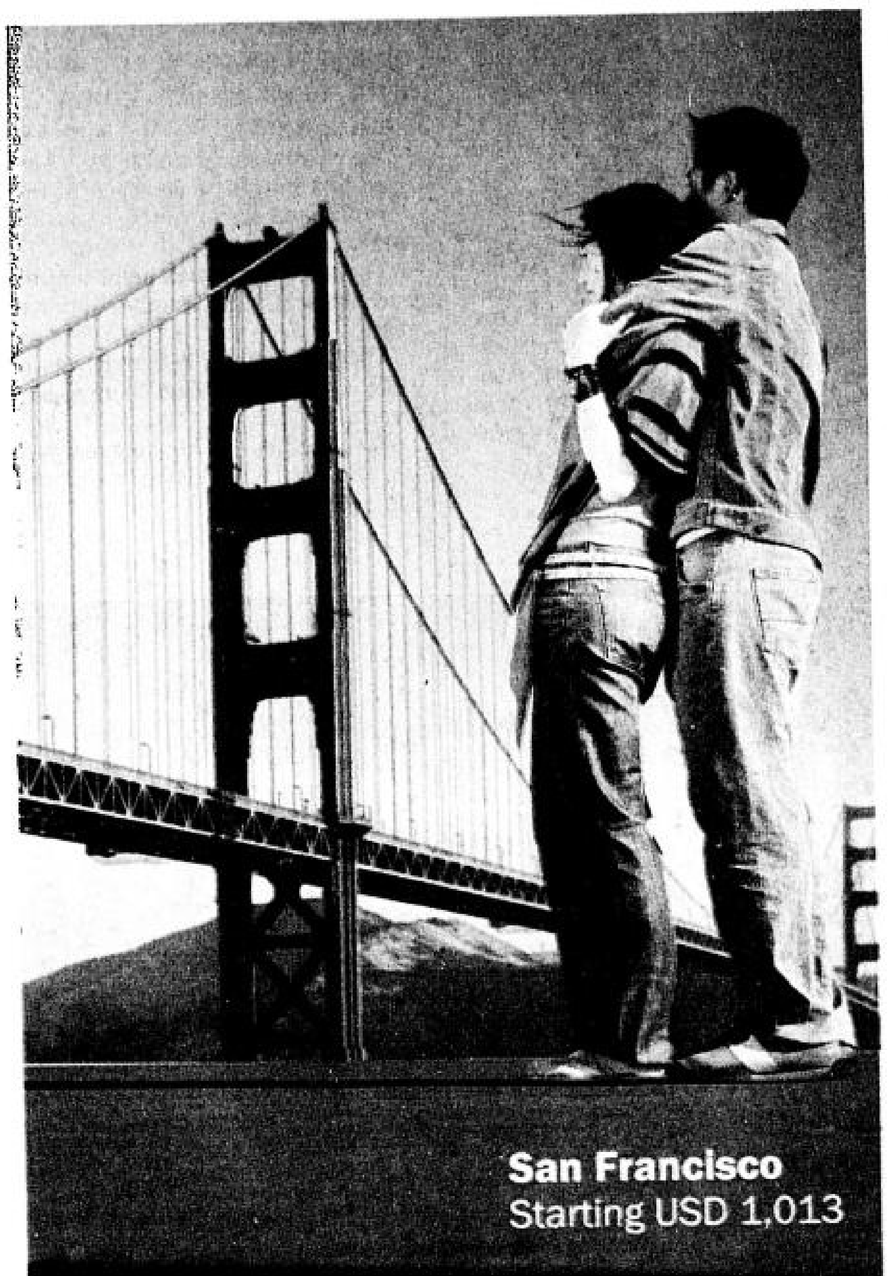

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VISA
All it takes.

Why I can't interpret everyone's dream

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

EVERY now and then, I still get letters from readers asking me to interpret their dreams, though I have repeatedly said I did not and could not interpret the dream of a person whose background and circumstances in life I did not know.

Sometimes the readers don't even give me their real names, so I don't even know whether they are male or female. How, in heaven's name, can they expect any one to interpret correctly their dreams?

Why is it that I, or anybody else, cannot interpret correctly a dream of a person he does not know? Because a dream can only be interpreted in the context of the dreamer's life and not the interpreter's.

Subconscious mind talking

A dream is nothing more than the language of the dreamer's subconscious mind. Therefore it can only be interpreted in terms of the dreamer's own life and circumstances. A dream is not like a story floating in space with nobody telling the story.

I sometimes get letters saying, "Mr. Licauco, I dreamt last night that my teeth were falling. What does it mean?"

Well, without knowing anything about the dreamer's current issues in life and his/her background, I cannot tell what it means. Perhaps the dream is telling the dreamer to go and see his/her dentist right away. And one should not put more meaning into it than what is warranted by the evidence or facts.

The reason many people are afraid of a dream like "falling teeth" is that there is a common belief that it signifies death in the family.

Well, if you live in a community or family where that is the belief, there may be some truth to this interpretation. But if you never heard such an interpretation before, better go see your dentist right away and forget about dying. It may be as simple as that.

> Interpretation can only be done in terms of a person's own life and circumstances; a dream is not a story without a storyteller

Interpreting correctly

For anyone to interpret a dream correctly, he should ask such specific questions as the dreamer's age, sex, marital status, profession or work, where he/she lives, current issues in life, problems, hopes, frustrations, desires, goals, relationships, number of sisters and brothers, educational background, economic and social status, likes and dislikes, etc.

Then he should ask what each element in the dream means to the dreamer. If the dreamer dreams of a snake, the interpreter should ask what snake means to the dreamer. Or what the snake reminds him/her of and so on, until every character, event, task, sequence, or item in the dream is accounted for.

Most often, the person trying to interpret a dream makes the mistake of seeing the dream from his own point of view and not from the dreamer's point of view. This is wrong because it is not his dream.

What usually happens is the interpreter merely interprets his own subconscious mind and not the dreamer's. In effect, he is merely projecting his own personal meaning that may be completely irrelevant to what the dreamer's subconscious mind is trying to say.

Mirror of the soul

A dream is a mirror of a person's soul. When you tell another person your dream, you are in effect revealing or exposing your soul to another person. There is nothing about you that can be hidden once you tell another person your dream. The dream may be couched in symbolism or clothed in a language you don't understand but once properly interpreted, you stand completely naked and exposed.

In my Inner Mind Development seminar, one topic included is how to analyze and interpret dreams and also how to use dreams to solve problems. But I don't interpret dreams of participants. I teach them how to interpret their own dreams through a very safe and simple process.

Dream interpretation is only one of many topics included in the seminar that aims to teach how to make better use of both sides or hemispheres of our own brain for problem-solving, decision-making, stress control, self-healing, goal-setting, remote-viewing, etc.

I hope that after this article, I will not receive anymore letters from readers asking me to interpret their dreams, unless they are willing to answer detailed questions about their personal lives and expose their very souls to the public.

Address letters to this column to Prince Plaza I, 106 Legazpi St., Legazpi Village, Makati City. Call 8107245 or 8926806. E-mail jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit http://jlicauco.shorturl.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program, 7-8 p.m. every Sunday.

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See you there at Shangri-La Finest Chinese Cuisine at No. 4 Times St., West Ave., Quezon City. For inquiries, call us at 373-9888.

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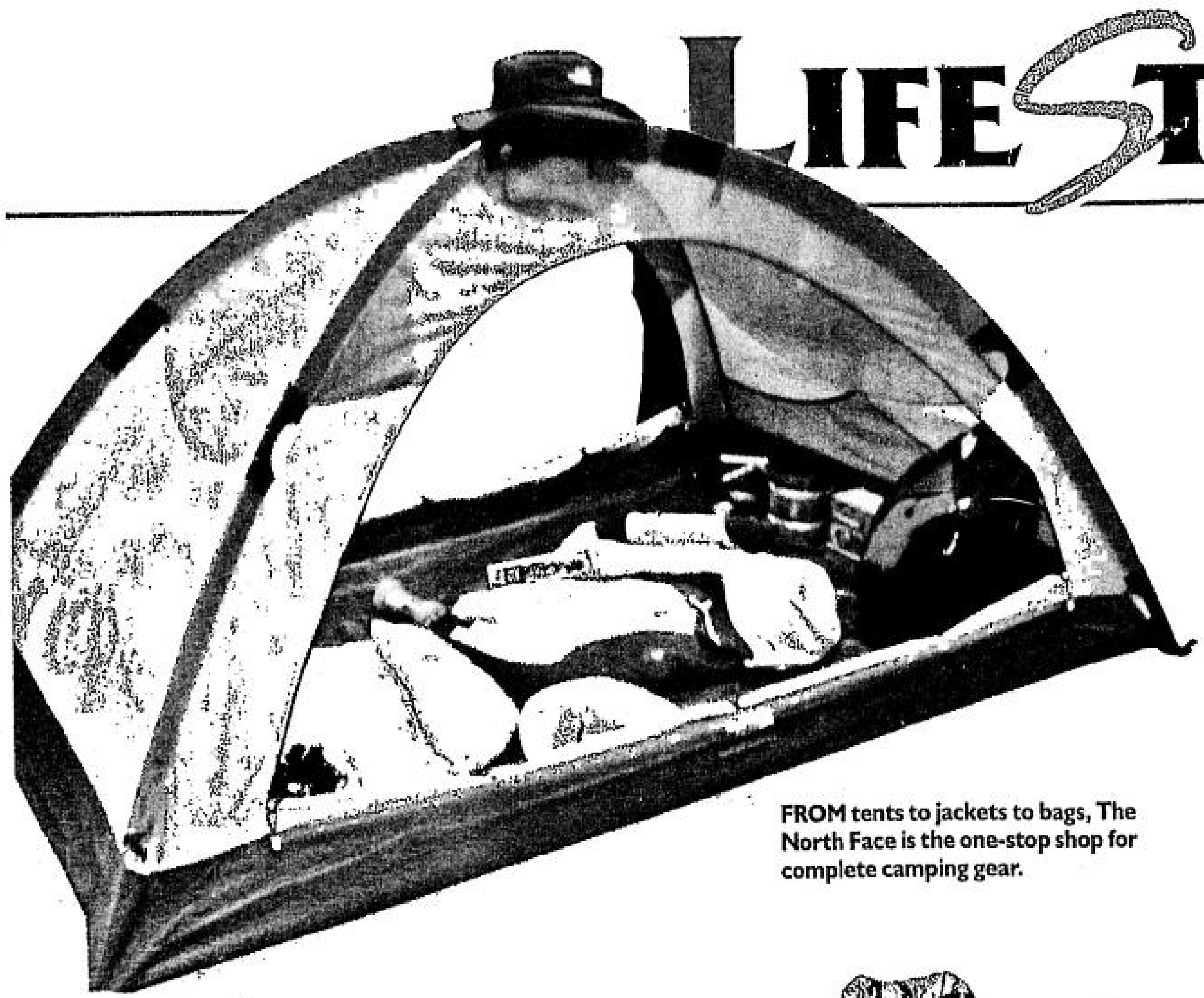


FROM tents to jackets to bags, The North Face is the one-stop shop for complete camping gear.

TODAY Mt. Aconcagua, tomorrow the world. Romy "Garduch" Garduce is the first Filipino in history to have reached the highest altitude on record. (Photo courtesy of The North Face)

When North meets South

THE LIMITED-edition Quantum Nuptse numbered jacket

Text and photos by Beia Formoso
Contributor

IT was only a matter of time before The North Face made its way through Southeast Asia.

Put up in 1966 by two hiking enthusiasts, The North Face is today recognized the world over for its high-performance outdoors gear and apparel, its logo synonymous with breakthrough technology, design and style. All that may sound boring, but wait until you hear that The North Face is the brand of choice for the women of "Sex and the City" (check out all their jackets in the final episode). Now what could be more fashionista than that? Or more of-the-moment than keeping warm the contestants of the latest "The Amazing Race"?

Complete line

The North Face first came to the Philippines in 2003, offering shoes and bags in Brat Pack and sporting goods stores. Its first signature store, however, did not open until September 2004 in Shangri-La Plaza. A second shop opened at the Rockwell Power Plant Mall in November.

The stores carry the complete line of bags, shoes, camping gear such as water bottles, cooking utensils, tents, sleeping bags; accessories like eyewear, hats and scarves; and apparel, even limited edition jackets filled with down (for extreme cold).

While the idea of down jackets in this country may seem absurd to some, Roel Chan, North Face's RP brand manager, attests to the fact that whole families have been purchasing gear for outbound trips to winter-torn places. Their market also includes the usual "weekend warriors"—groups who go hiking or mountain climbing on weekends.

Most of their shoppers are outbound Filipinos and foreigners who relish finding The North Face products at reasonable prices adjusted to the Philippine setting.

According to Chan, their best sellers are the apparel that are desirable for their "design and fabric technology."

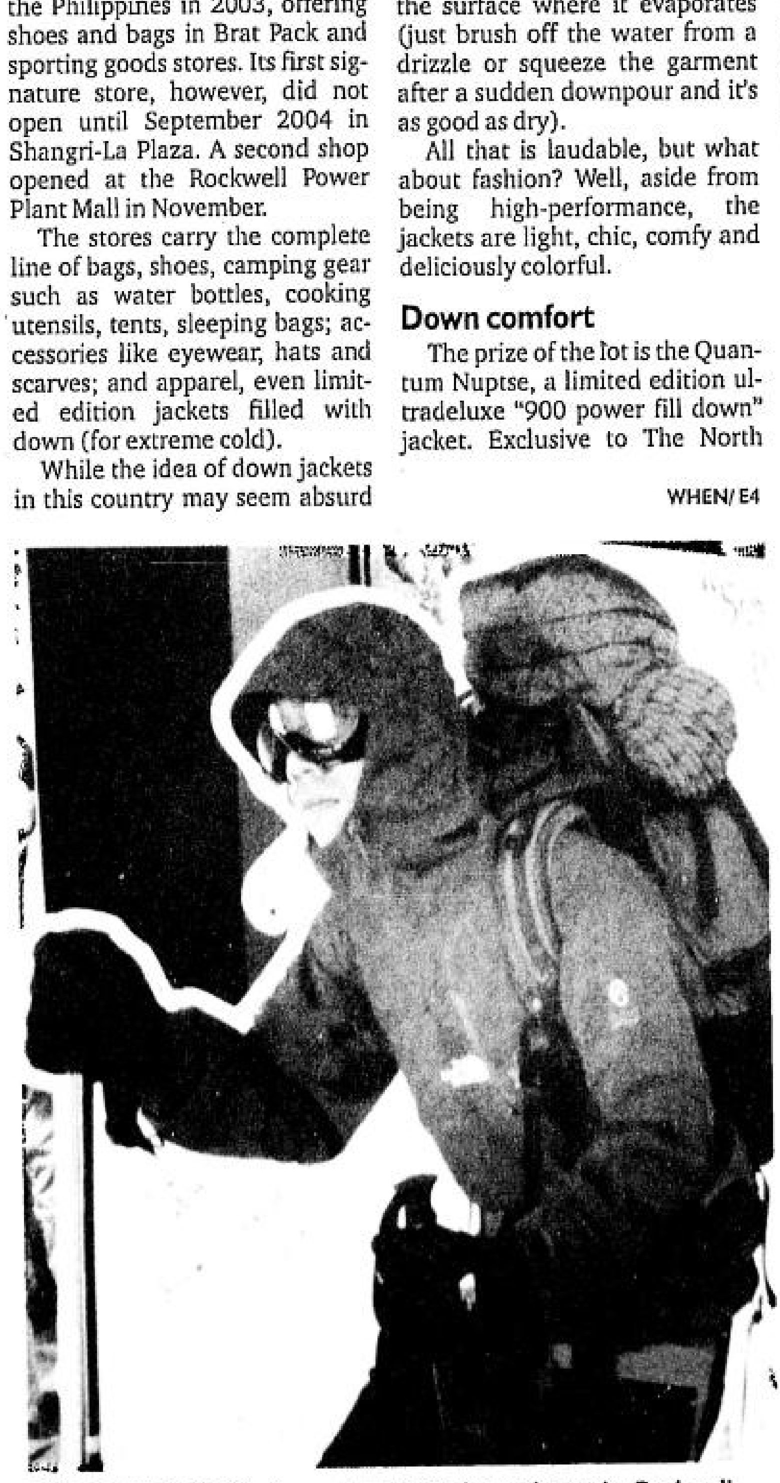
The North Face takes rightful pride in its Ultraviolet Protection Fabric (UPF) 30+, which protects from harmful ultraviolet rays; its Polartec Power Stretch fleece, which resists wind and abrasions and has a rubber coating for stretching ability; and its Vapor-Wick, a quick-drying fabric that pulls sweat away from the skin to the surface where it evaporates (just brush off the water from a drizzle or squeeze the garment after a sudden downpour and it's as good as dry).

All that is laudable, but what about fashion? Well, aside from being high-performance, the jackets are light, chic, comfy and deliciously colorful.

Down comfort

The prize of the lot is the Quantum Nuptse, a limited edition ultradeluxe "900 power fill down" jacket. Exclusive to The North

WHEN/ E4



AUTOGRAPHED life-size poster of Garduce adorns the Rockwell store.

Pizza Hut

BUDDY MEALS

Great Meal for a Great Deal!

Available for dine-in from 10 AM to 6 PM, Mondays to Fridays (except holidays). Visit your nearest Pizza Hut restaurant.

Meal 1
- Hawaiian Buddy Pan Pizza
- Mushroom Soup
- Glass of NESTEA

FOR ONLY ₱79

Meal 2
- Ham & Cheese Buddy Pan Pizza
- Spaghetti with Meatsauce (1/2 serving)
- Glass of NESTEA

FOR ONLY ₱79

Meal 3
- Hawaiian Buddy Pan Pizza
- Spaghetti with Meatsauce
- Garlic Bread
- 2 glasses of NESTEA

FOR ONLY ₱149
GOOD FOR 2
₱74.50/PERSON

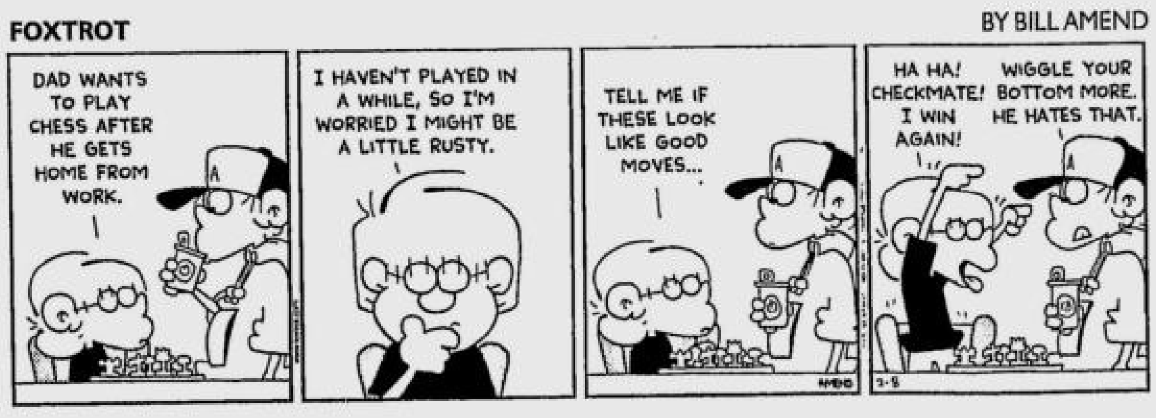
Just add ₱25 for bottomless NESTEA

Prices are subject to 10% service charge and local tax.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
ComicRelief
e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2005

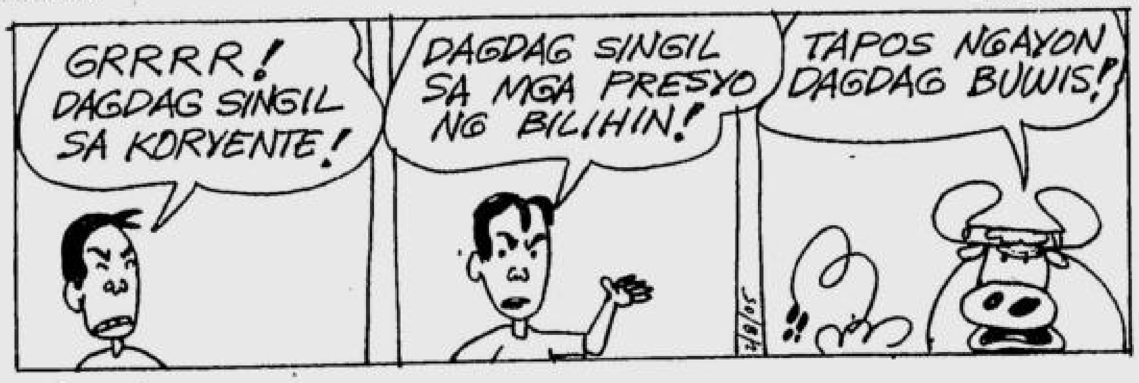
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


DAD WANTS TO PLAY CHESS AFTER HE GETS HOME FROM WORK.
I HAVEN'T PLAYED IN A WHILE, SO I'M WORRIED I MIGHT BE A LITTLE RUSTY.
TELL ME IF THESE LOOK LIKE GOOD MOVES...
HA HA! CHECKMATE! I WIN AGAIN!
WIGGLE YOUR BOTTOM MORE. HE HATES THAT.
2-8

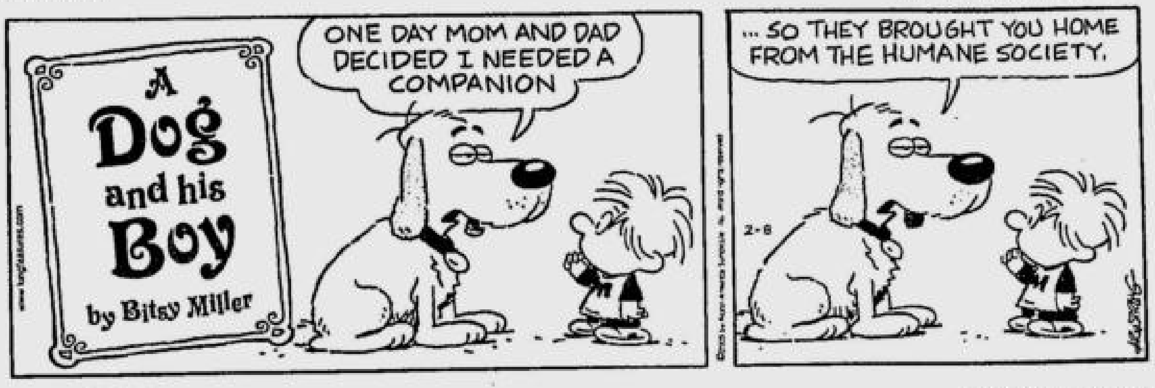
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


GRRRR! DAGDAG SINGIL SA KORYENTE!
DAGDAG SINGIL SA MGA PRESYO NG BILIHIN!
TAPOS NGAYON DAGDAG BUWIS!

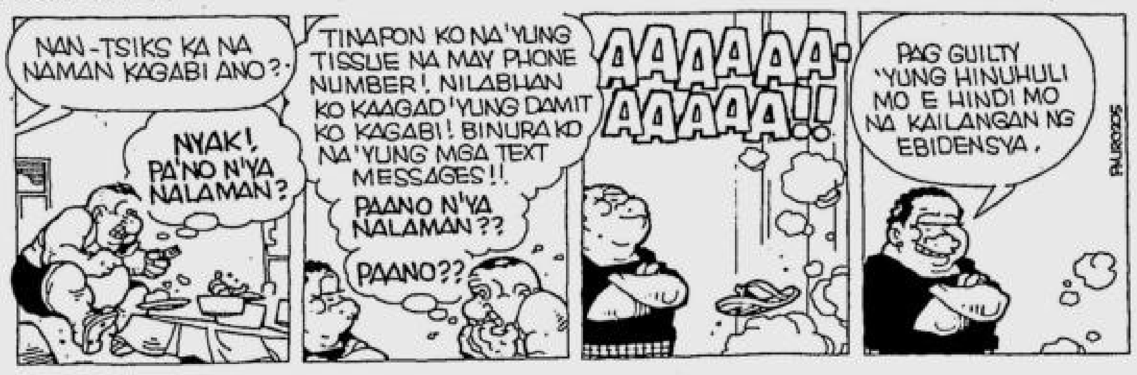
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


A Dog and his Boy by Bitsy Miller
ONE DAY MOM AND DAD DECIDED I NEEDED A COMPANION
... SO THEY BROUGHT YOU HOME FROM THE HUMANE SOCIETY.
2-8

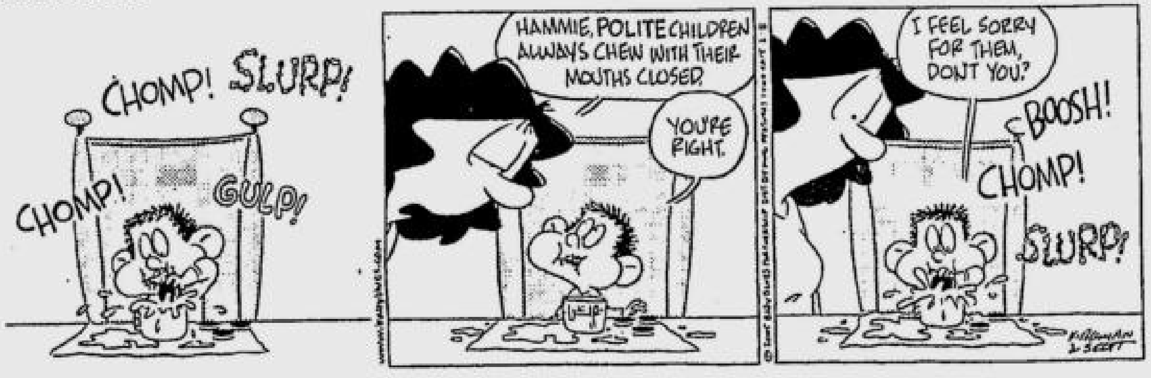
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NAN-TSIKS KA NA NAMAN KAGABI ANO?
NYAK! PA'NO N'YA NALAMAN?
TINAPON KO NA 'YUNG TISSUE NA MAY PHONE NUMBER!. NILABHAN KO KAAGAD 'YUNG DAMIT KO KAGABI!. BINURA KO NA 'YUNG MGA TEXT MESSAGES!!
PAANO N'YA NALAMAN??
PAANO??
AAAAAA-AAAAAA!!
PAG GUILTY 'YUNG HINUHULI MO E HINDI MO NA KAILANGAN NG EBIDENSYA.

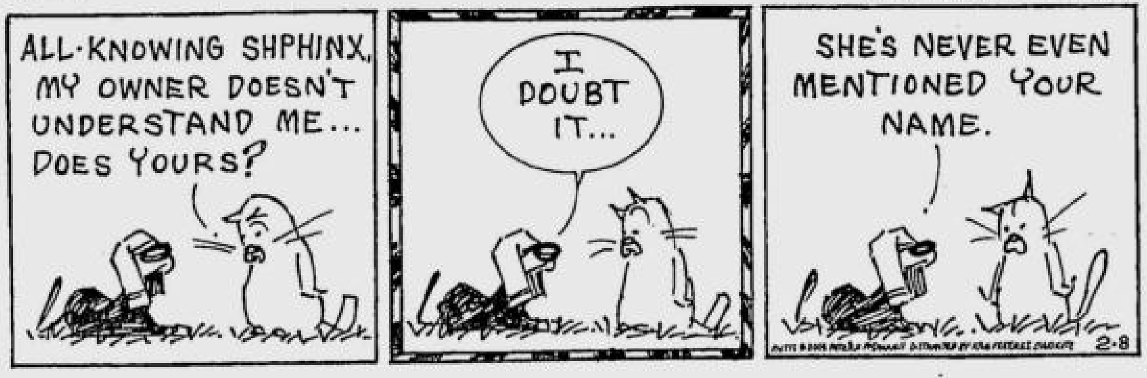
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


CHOMP! SLURP!
CHOMP! GULP!
HAMMIE, POLITE CHILDREN ALWAYS CHEW WITH THEIR MOUTHS CLOSED.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
I FEEL SORRY FOR THEM, DON'T YOU?
BOOSH!
CHOMP!
SLURP!
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

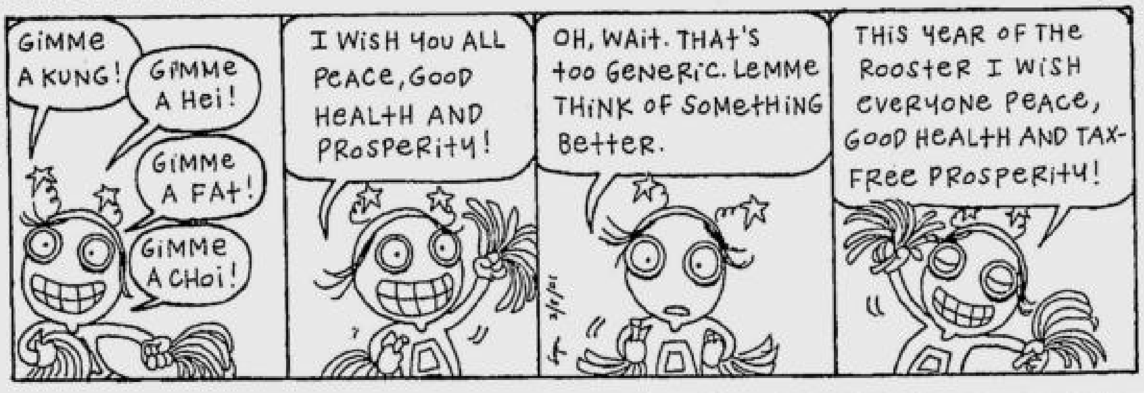
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


ALL-KNOWING SHPHINX, MY OWNER DOESN'T UNDERSTAND ME... DOES YOURS?
I DOUBT IT...
SHE'S NEVER EVEN MENTIONED YOUR NAME.
2-8

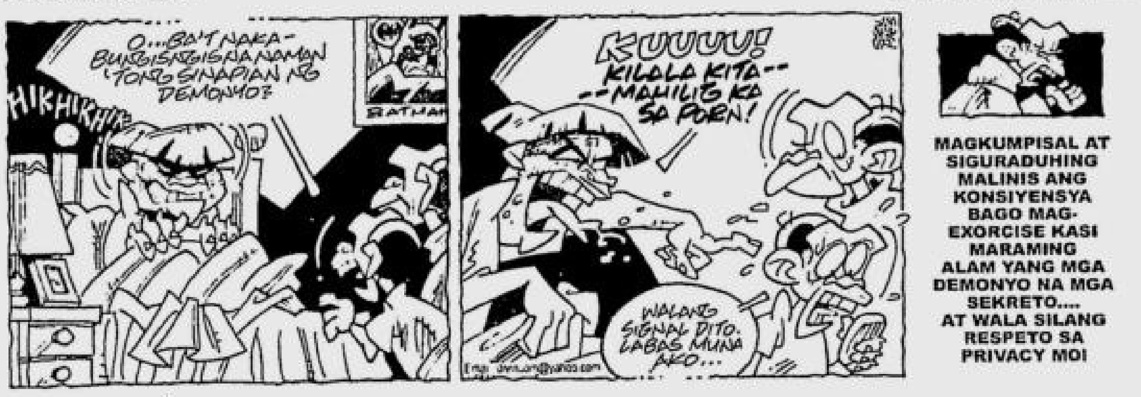
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


GiMMe A KUNG!
GiMMe A Hei!
GiMMe A FAt!
GiMMe A CHoi!
I WiSH You ALL PeACe, GooD HeALtH AND PRoSPeRitY!
OH, WAit. THAt'S too GeNeRiC. LeMMe THiNK of SoMetHiNG Better.
THiS YeAR oF THe Rooster I WiSH everyone PeACe, GooD HeALtH AND TAX-FRee PRoSPeRitY!

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


O...BA'T NAKA-BUNGISNGIS NA NAMAN 'TONG SINAPIAN NG DEMONYO?
HIKHIKHIK
BATMAN
KUUUU! KILALA KITA-- --MAHILIG KA SA PORN!
WALANG SIGNAL DITO. LABAS MUNA AKO...
MAGKUMPISAL AT SIGURADUHING MALINIS ANG KONSIYENSYA BAGO MAG-EXORCISE KASI MARAMING ALAM YANG MGA DEMONYO NA MGA SEKRETO.... AT WALA SILANG RESPETO SA PRIVACY MO!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You often have highly developed practical skills. You're also extremely intuitive, even psychic. On the whole, you have good timing with money. You look before you leap. Intellectually, you're a planner. Emotionally, you're quite complex. You are very fortunate because the year ahead could be one of the best years of your life. Expect a miracle!

Birthdate of: Seth Green, actor; James Dean, actor; Jack Lemmon, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You feel extremely idealistic about something. You're willing to work with friends and groups to help those who are less fortunate than you are. Be clear about your goals.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You want to speak out publicly on behalf of others. People see you as sympathetic, kind and caring. You might lobby VIPs on behalf of others.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Religions and philosophies that stress compassion and caring attract you today. You feel a need to go beyond your own little nest. You're taking a worldly view of things.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You might do fund raising or solicit others to help someone with their money, possessions or belongings. Possibly, you'll help someone directly yourself.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Be extra-clear in all your communications today. Mercury and Neptune oppose you now. This means you might imagine what someone says, but in fact, it isn't what he or she is saying at all!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Your ability to visualize and imagine can be used at work today. You can make great progress in areas related to film, photography, plastics, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, cosmetics and the ocean.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You're so dreamy-eyed and romantic today, it's tough to be realistic. It's much more fun to pretend! Actually, your creative vibes are fabulous. Don't hesitate to act on them.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You want to help a family member today. Possibly, somebody wants to help you. Either way, there's a mutual sensitivity among family and those where you live.

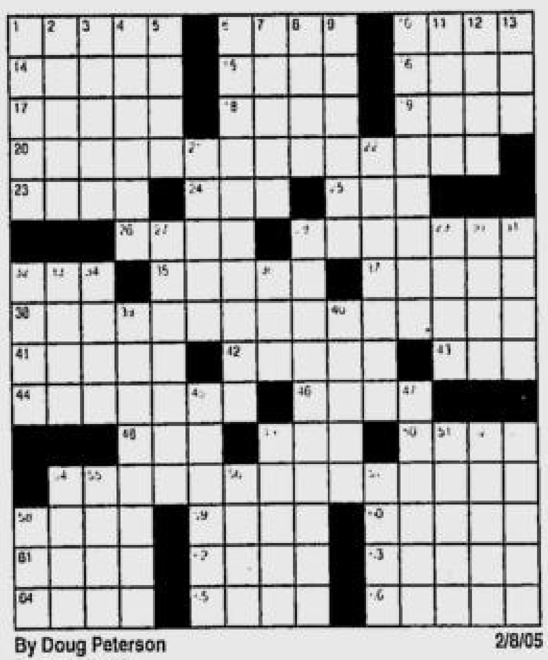
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): It's very easy to daydream and fantasize today. This makes it hard to get down to work, especially mental, routine work. (Have courage.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might give money to a charity today; you might spend it on a luxury. The main thing to know, however, is that your financial judgment is a bit off today. It's too idealistic to be practical.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Four planets are in your sign: the Sun, Mercury, Venus and Neptune. This makes you highly empathetic, emotional and sensitive to the feelings of others.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You can definitely trust your psychic vibes today. Your intuition is turned way up! You can practically read the thoughts of others.

DAILY CROSSWORD

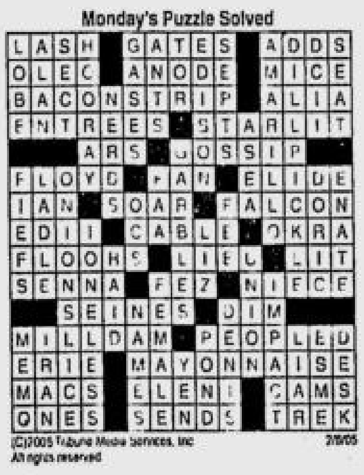


By Doug Peterson
Pasadena, CA
2/8/05

ACROSS
1 Big Mac layer
6 Pueblo people
10 Stare stupidly
14 "My Own Private __"
15 Black, to Blake
16 Angler's doodad
17 Jotted down
18 Skimpy skirt
19 Oscar role for Julia
20 Chow down
23 Parched
24 CIA forerunner
25 "Monsters, __"
26 Cruise the mall
28 Take a chill pill
32 Psychic's gift
35 Catchall category
37 Backwoods
38 Get into scoring position
41 Ill-humored
42 WWII riveter
43 Smoked salmon
44 As a group
46 Light on one's feet
48 Broadway background
49 Routing word
50 Windmill element
54 Flee from police
58 Island near Sumatra
59 Crisscross framework
60 Room at the top
61 Top Norse god
62 Mickey and Mighty
63 No longer novel
64 Small fry
65 High point
66 Intrinsically

DOWN
1 Sonar echoes
2 Love
3 Steppes settler
4 City on the Nile
5 Luke's Jedi mentor
6 Globe division
7 Final bios
8 Corn dish
9 Ab __ (from the beginning)
10 Singing group
11 Invisible emanation
12 Court document
13 Author Kesey
21 Sends packing
22 Requested but not yet delivered
27 The Pope's jurisdiction
28 Enter under multiple headings
29 __ Roberts U.
30 Burkina __
31 Display muscle
32 Latin 101 verb
33 Knock senseless
34 Salon treatment
36 Earth-friendly prefix
39 Kodiak populace
40 Attack like a puppy
45 Mark of Cain
47 Actress Mimieux
49 Give tongue to
51 Sacred stand
52 Toe protectors
53 Host at a roast
54 Fanfare syllables
55 Enthusiastic
56 Stumble
57 Padlock's partner
58 Iota

Monday's Puzzle Solved



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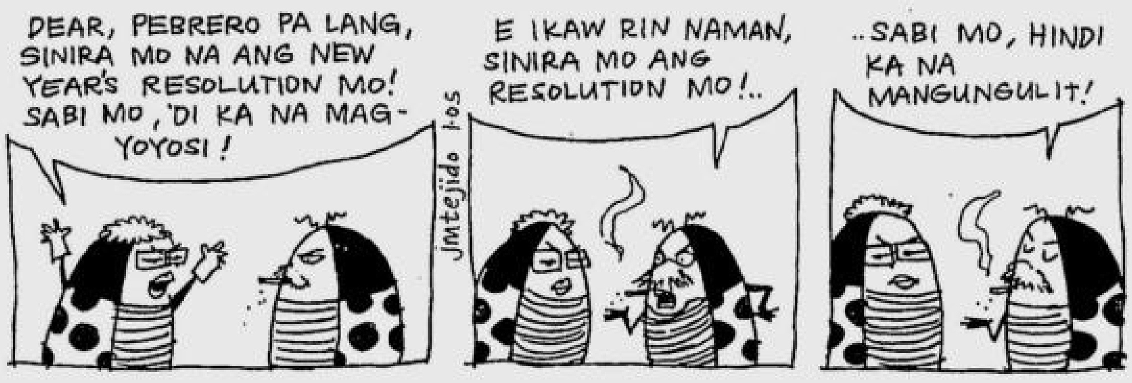
2/8/05

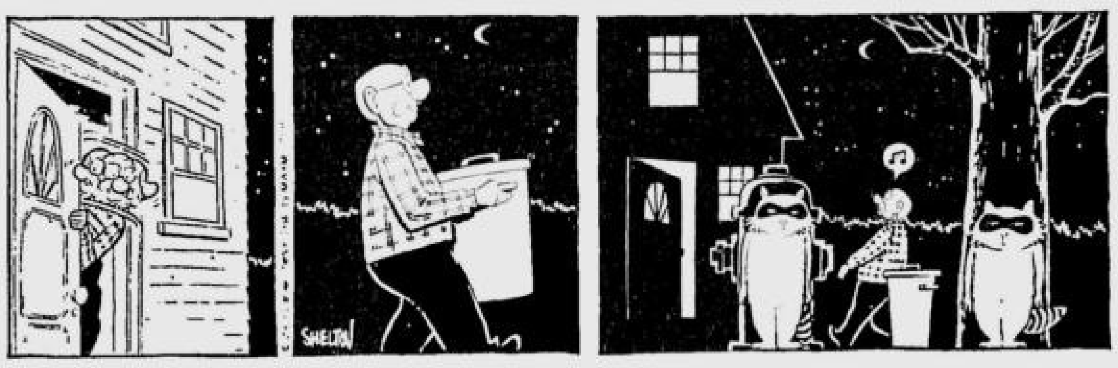
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


DEAR, PEBRERO PA LANG, SINIRA MO NA ANG NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION MO! SABI MO, 'DI KA NA MAG-YOYOSI!
jmtejido 1-05
E IKAW RIN NAMAN, SINIRA MO ANG RESOLUTION MO!..
..SABI MO, HINDI KA NA MANGUNGULIT!

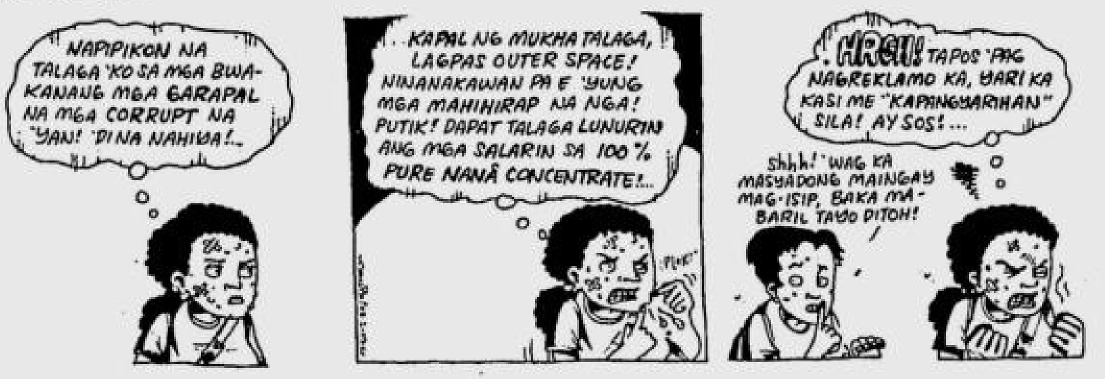
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON



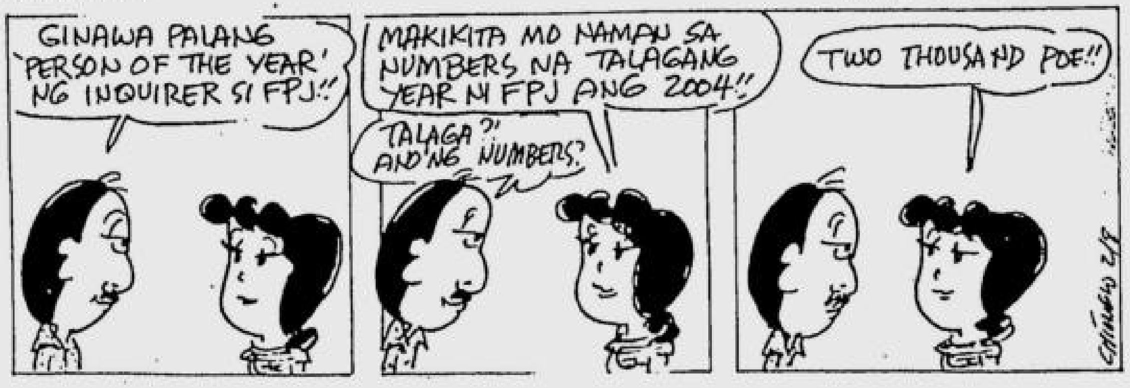
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


NAPIPIKON NA TALAGA 'KO SA MGA BWA-KANANG MGA GARAPAL NA MGA CORRUPT NA 'YAN! 'DI NA NAHIYA!..
..KAPAL NG MUKHA TALAGA, LAGPAS OUTER SPACE! NINANAKAWAN PA E 'YUNG MGA MAHIHIRAP NA NGA! PUTIK! DAPAT TALAGA LUNURIN ANG MGA SALARIN SA 100% PURE NANÂ CONCENTRATE!..
PLUK!
HRGH! TAPOS 'PAG NAGREKLAMO KA, YARI KA KASI ME "KAPANGYARIHAN" SILA! AY SOS!...
Shhh! 'WAG KA MASYADONG MAINGAY MAG-ISIP, BAKA MA-BARIL TAYO DITOH!

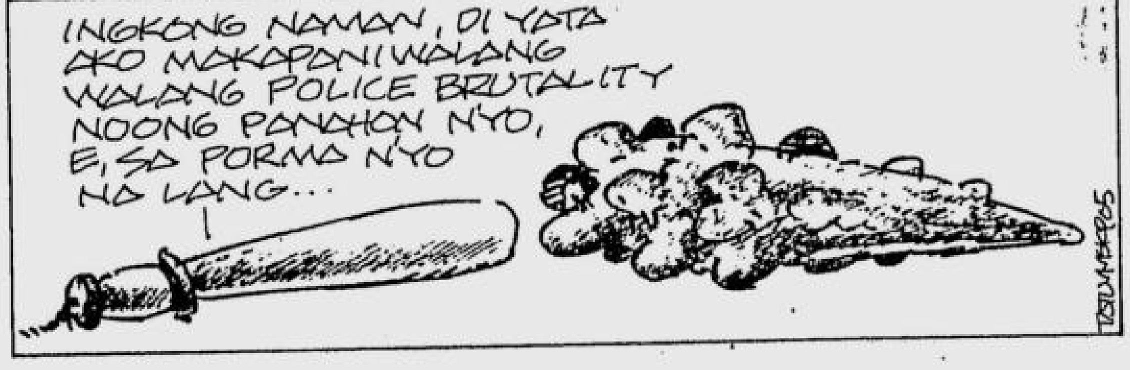
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


GINAWA PALANG 'PERSON OF THE YEAR' NG INQUIRER SI FPJ!!
MAKIKITA MO NAMAN SA NUMBERS NA TALAGANG YEAR NI FPJ ANG 2004!!
TALAGA?! ANO'NG NUMBERS?
TWO THOUSAND POE!!
CHIONGLO 2/8

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


INGKONG NAMAN, DI YATA AKO MAKAPANIWALANG WALANG POLICE BRUTALITY NOONG PANAHON NYO, E, SA PORMA NYO NA LANG...
TATUMPAPU05

Running for a clean Pasig

THE CLEAN and Green Project, spearheaded by former First Lady Amelita "Ming" Ramos, will hold the first Philippine Marathon for the Pasig River on Feb. 27.

Formerly known as the Pasig River Heritage Marathon, the race is going international for the first time this year.

The marathon goes international this year after it was accredited by the United States-based Association of International Marathons and Road Races (AIMS) and the International Association of Athletic Federations (IAAF).

Expected to draw participants from all over the world, the Philippine Marathon for the Pasig River will also serve as a historical tour and a tourism promotional campaign as it will cover all 42 km of the river and 11 of its 13 historic bridges.

It also retraces the route pre-Hispanic Filipino chieftain Rajah Sulayman took from Intramuros to his new settlement in Hae, Laguna.

Ramos said the project would focus world attention on the Pasig River and participants could learn more about the rich history of the river.

For the international marathon, the Clean and Green Project is bringing Class B measurers from Australia to make sure measurements were complete and accurate.

The internationally recognized and certified measurer will also guarantee the inclusion of the winner's name in the record books in case a world record is matched or set.

The sporting event will be co-chaired by swimmer Eric Buhain and volleyball standout Tisha Abundo.

Ramos said registration for the race could be done via the Internet. Some participants are being fielded by their respective running clubs.

The former First Lady hopes to raise a significant amount from this project to fund ongoing campaigns of the non-government organization for the Pasig River.

Cash prizes ranging from P75,000 to P100,000 are considered as among the highest given in Philippines-based marathons.

FORMER President Fidel V. Ramos is an enthusiastic supporter not just of the Pasig cleanup but also the marathon.

Permanent solution to hair loss

NU/HART Hair Clinics, a world leader in hair transplantation, has opened its first center in the Philippines to respond to the growing demand from Filipinos suffering from hair loss.

The international chain has performed over 25,000 hair transplant procedures on clients from 40 countries over the past 15 years. Manila is its 11th branch.

Nu/Hart has a team of United States-trained hair transplant surgeons who can perform the most advanced technology to repair hair loss. Procedures will be adapted to individual needs of clients.

Several Filipinos have already availed of the services of Nu/Hart Center at Wynsum Corporate Plaza on Emerald Avenue in Ortigas Center.

Hair loss can be addressed using both non-surgical and surgical approaches. People can apply formulations (like Minoxidil), use hair pieces and wigs, or undergo hair transplant. Hair transplants appear to be the most effective as implanted grafts reportedly have a 99-100 percent survival rate. It is also a permanent solution, resulting in more savings in the long run.

Mac Fadra, Nu/Hart managing director, said the procedure was relatively painless and fairly simple. Only one or two sessions were required depending on the volume of hair that had to be restored.

He said transplantation was a safe, natural, permanent and affordable solution to hair loss.

Nu/Hart uses the latest techniques in transplantation giving the client the most natural head of hair. The Neografting Process also results in faster healing, thus less disruptive of a busy schedule.

Nu/Hart Manila is located at the 26/F of the Wynsum Corporate Plaza on Emerald Avenue in Ortigas Center. Call 6386000 or visit www.nuhart.com. E-mail manila@nuhart.com.

BEFORE Nu/Hart hair transplant

AFTER

Have a hearty heart month

FEBRUARY is National Heart Month. The annual observance aims to raise awareness on how to prevent heart diseases, which have become major health problems and top killers in the Philippines.

In support of the annual observance, E. Excel presents four products that will help provide good nutrition for the heart.

Studies have shown that many heart problems resulted from eating wrong foods. So proper nutrition will help prevent heart ailments to aid the recovery of patients suffering from such diseases.

As cholesterol and fat buildup is a leading cause of heart disease, E. Excel has Herba all-natural beverage, a concoction of phytonutrients containing Chinese plum and orange peel. It also has wintermelon, which is rich in protein, fiber and Vitamin C and is said to be effective in preventing heart disease and high blood pressure.

Formulated to help counter the negative effects of high salt, monosodium glutamate, fat and sugar consumption, is Refresh, a beverage made from wholesome plant foods like asparagus, mulberry leaf and shiitake mushroom. It is designed to complement the body's natural processes. Asparagus can aid in the treatment of rheumatism and edema caused by heart failure.

Mulberry leaves are reportedly high in protein, Vitamins A, B-complex, C, D and E and 15 essential amino acids. An extract from shiitake mushroom has been found to help stimulate the immune system and lower blood pressure and blood cholesterol.

Circle herb food concentrate contains chrysanthemum, hawthorn and peach seed to keep the circulatory system healthy. Chrysanthemum has a cooling, antibiotic effect and can help reduce blood pressure.

Hawthorn shrubs, on the other hand, may dilate coronary arteries, facilitating blood flow to the heart and helping regulate the heart's ability to pump blood. Peach has high amounts of iron, critical for blood production.

Act contains nutritious, whole food ingredients including ganoderma mushroom and luffa cylindrical that help promote balance for the body's defense system and help in the fight against disease-causing microorganisms.

Also in observance of Heart Month, everyone is invited to E. Excel's Testimonial Party on Feb: 12, 9:30 a.m., 23/F, Rufino Pacific Tower, 6784 Ayala Ave., Makati City.

The party puts together people who have overcome their battle against heart ailments with the help of nutritional immunology. Witness and be inspired by how this new science can boost the immune system and promote optimal physical wellness.

There will be free seminars on weekdays from 2-4 p.m. Call 8110837.

Delicious way to go on health 'trip'

THE JOURNEY to a healthier and more active "you" need not be an ordeal.

Changing your diet for a stronger heart need not mean taking the fun out of eating. A good way to have a healthy but enjoyable diet is to include oatmeal as part of your daily food regimen.

Australia Harvest Oatmeal is not only a delicious breakfast but can also be an "any-time-of-the-day" food. It has lots of soluble fiber that can help reduce cholesterol levels in the body.

Oatmeal is also known to lower blood pressure as well as reduce the risk of heart disease. Studies have shown there is a direct relation between the amount of cholesterol in the blood and the risk of having a heart attack. On the other hand, every reduction in the cholesterol level reduces the risk significantly.

It is the soluble fiber in Australia Harvest Oatmeal that helps reduce blood cholesterol levels. Adding the Australia Harvest Oatmeal to your meal can have many beneficial effects not only to the heart, but to the whole body as well especially if combined with a healthy diet and regular exercise.

To experience a reduction in blood cholesterol, Australia Harvest Oatmeal suggests eating 1½ cups of cooked oatmeal (approximately ¾ cups of uncooked oats). This should provide three grams of oat soluble fiber each day.

The United States Food and Drug Administration recommends this amount for those who wish to reduce their cholesterol levels through proper nutrition.

But even as little as one gram of oat soluble fiber per day can start you off on the journey to a healthier you.

Australia Harvest Oatmeal products include, Quick Cooking Oats, Instant Oats, Oat Bran, Old Fashioned Rolled Oats, Honey Toasted Muesli and Pearled Barley. With the goodness of West Australia's Mortlock Oats, Australia Harvest Oatmeal is available in major supermarkets and grocery stores nationwide.

Goody goodies

THE MANE business continues to get bigger across the globe and in the Philippines, particularly.

"This generation—both men and women—is paying a lot of attention to their hair, wearing a lot more hair accessories," noted Goody International Sales Manager Howard Wenbert, who was in town recently to visit Goody outlets in the Greater Manila Area and to present influencing trends in fashion and hair accessories for 2005.

Goody identified three trends for next year. There's "Vintage Chic" in which everything old becomes new: it combines glamour, femininity and sophistication and uses fabrics like laces, satins, silks, linen materials and velvet. Essential embellishments that celebrate "Vintage Chic" are yarn, rope, feathers, beads and pearls. This Goody line will carry hair accessories that celebrate the romanticism and classic beauty of a bygone era.

Wenbert labeled the second trend as the "Hamptons," which is all about the Americana look. In RTW, think preppy, nautical, lots of stripes and khakis. From a product standpoint, Goody's "Hamptons" line revisits classic colors and details: earth tones, primary colors like red, white and blue, and more pastels. Everyone—from students to office executives—can be a Goody "Hamptons" Girl.

The third trend is called "Next Generation" and veers toward the techno look, incorporating sleek, metallic, innovative and exaggerated elements. The materials for "Next Generation" may be glass, metallic leather, mesh, snaps, spikes and iridescent fabrics. Free spirits and audacious individuals will fall in love with the "Next Generation" collection of Goody hair accessories.

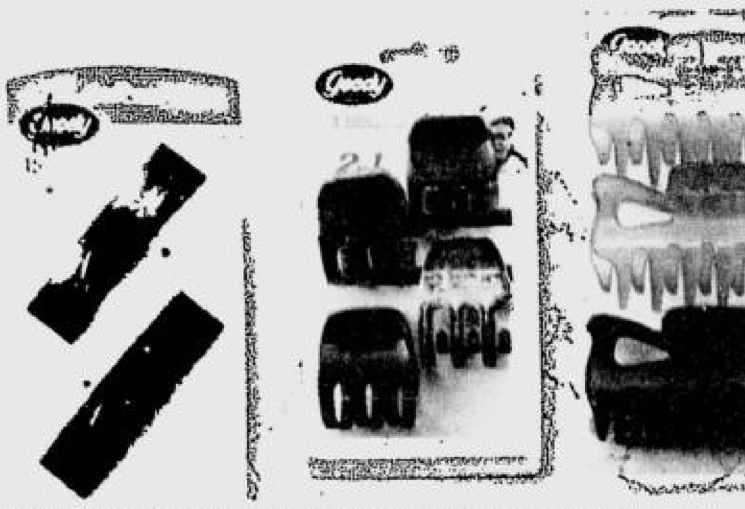
These are exciting times for the modern consumer; individuals now have the power of choice. But while there has been a flood of reasonably priced items in the local market, consumers have to be wary of ending up with cheap, sidewalk-quality stuff. We've all been there before: you buy a cheap clip today and it breaks apart after only a few uses.

"To address the influx of lower-priced goods, we continue to develop innovative, trend-forward products," Wenbert reports. "Goody is driven by consumer needs. The brand is really trying to understand more about how the consumer uses the product, what products they want." A successful result of Goody's meticulous market research is its "Ouchless" line that promotes pain-free hairstyling. It includes the elastic (made minus the metal so it doesn't snag the hair) and very soon, the "Ouchless" brush.

For several decades now, Goody has been developing products that highlight a girl's many facets. With more gorgeous new products from Goody on their way to local store shelves, you can bid bye-bye to bad hair days in 2005.

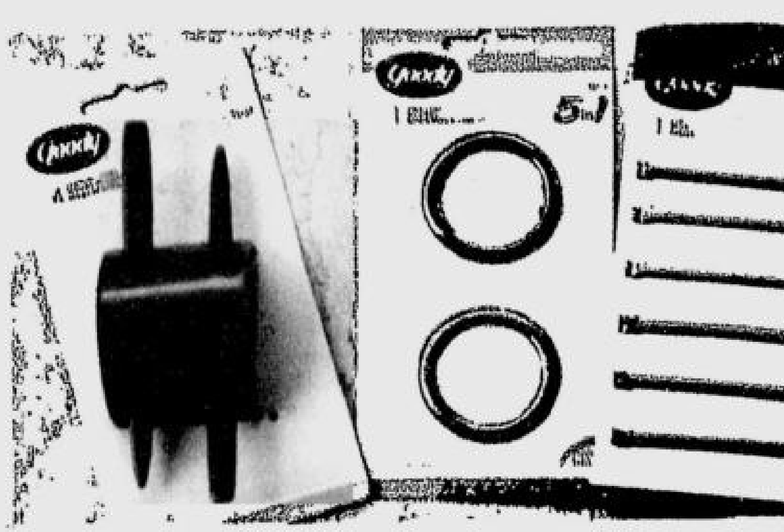
Goody Products is a division of the Newell-Rubbermaid Company and is locally and exclusively distributed by Goody Products Phils., Inc. Products available in leading department stores nationwide.

HOWARD Wenbert, Goody's international sales manager



THE VINTAGE Chic trend —everything old becomes new.

THE AMERICANA look called Hamptons revisits classic colors and details.



THE NEW Generation trend veers toward the techno look.

Addressing adolescent health issues

THE LACTACYD Confidence and Philippine Obstetrical and Gynecological Society (POGS) have launched the Teens Xpressing Themselves (TxT) program.

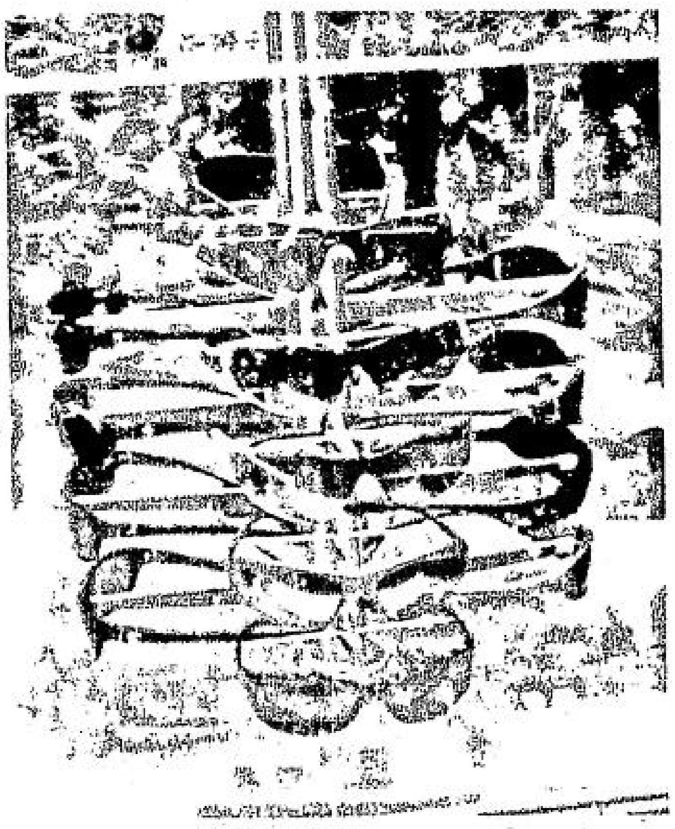
It is part of their Adolescent Health Issues and Perspectives project aimed at educating young women. Through the project, POGS and Lactacyd Confidence have talked to some 7,500 students from different schools like St. Therese's College, University of the Philippines Integrated School, Manila Science High School and Immaculate Conception Academy.

At a recent press conference, POGS members presented a study from the Population Commission which found that "mistakes that arise from early sexual activity which usually result from experimentation have the most disturbing impact on young people."

The doctors also reported that unwanted pregnancy was the top killer of teenage mothers.

The TxT program consists of four modules discussing the issues and concerns that young people face during adolescence. The first module talks about basic facts regarding adolescence, such as its stages and characteristics. The second module aims to correct young people's misconceptions on menstruation, hygiene and sex. The third module tackles prevalent behavior among adolescents to help them recognize such behavior and to help them in decision-making. The fourth module discusses the consequences of irresponsible sex, differences in behavior toward sex and homosexuality. It also encourages young people to seek medical help in addressing sexuality issues as well as physical, emotional and psychological concerns.

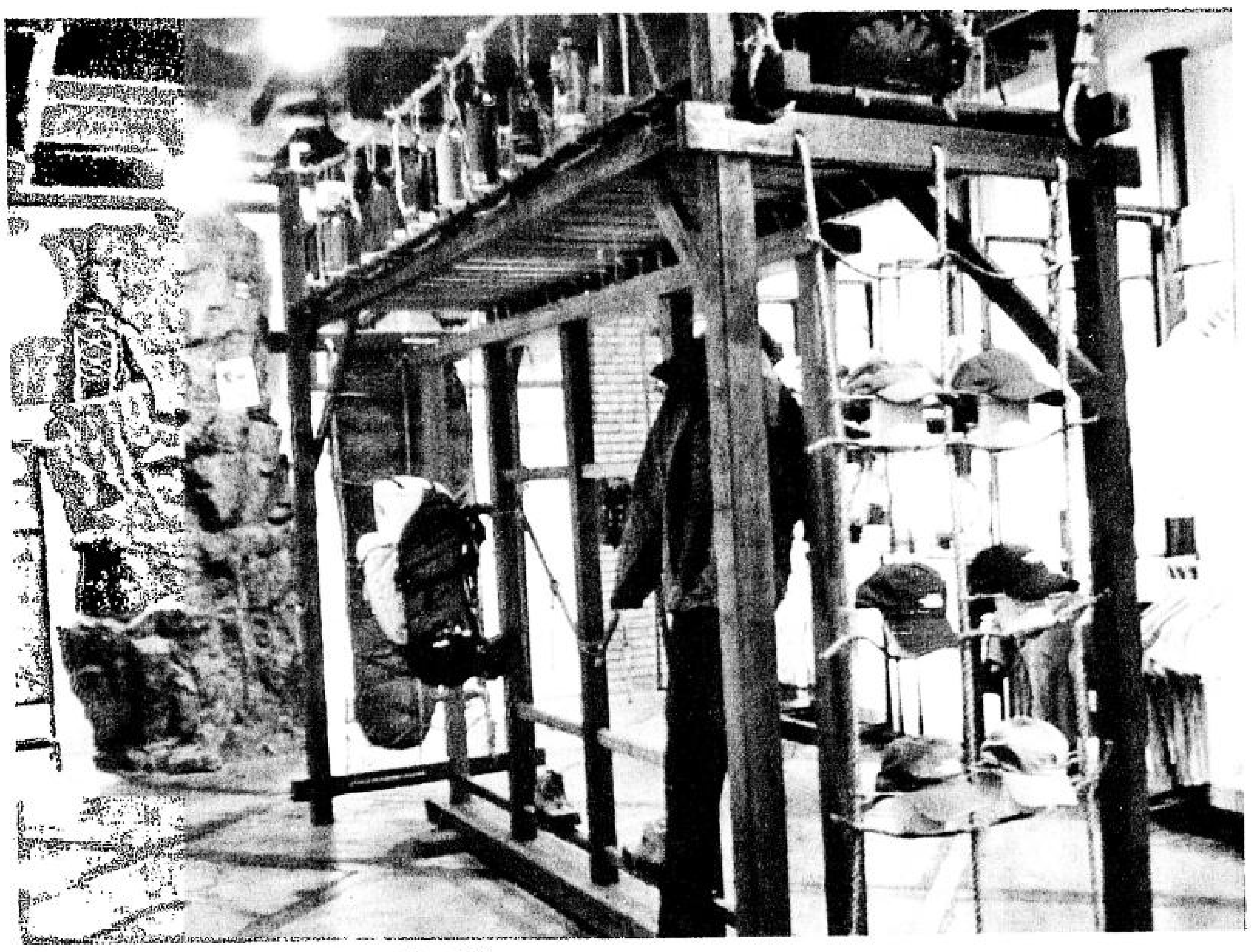
BACKPACKS of all shapes and sizes



THE ONLY eyewear made specifically for mountaineering

FIRST-class camping gear

THE FACES of The North Face: Johnny Thai, managing director; Romi Garduce; Roel Chan, brand manager



THE NORTH Face shop in Rockwell Power Plant Mall

When North meets South

The North Face train of thought is 'Never stop exploring' and that's easy for the company to say because it makes high-tech, high-performing, highly protective apparel and accessories

From page E1

Face, 900 power fill down is the highest quality down commercially available. It is the lightest and most compressible down with the best warmth-to-weight ratio. Each Quantum Nuptse is numbered, as only 5,000 were made.

In addition to exclusive jackets, "The North Face is the only brand (in the Philippines) that carries eyewear made specifically for mountaineering," says Chan. The lightweight eyewear is specially made for high altitude, provides ventilation, possesses titanium frames for thermal resistance and can even act as a substitute for skiing goggles. The North Face is also the first to use the Venturi effect to eradicate lens fogging.

The driving force behind such technological advances is The North Face team of athletes. Composed of the world's finest mountaineers, alpinists, climbers, skiers, snowboarders and endurance adventurers who have defined the limits of what is humanly possible, the team pursues adventures in remote regions of the world to test their personal limits and the limits of their gear, thereby helping the brand create innovative designs that push new technologies and inspire cutting-edge products.

Pinoy peak freak

The Philippines has earned a place in The North Face athletes' team in the person of Romi "Garduch" Garduce, the Filipino mountaineer who returned recently from a successful climb at Mt. Aconcagua, Argentina, the highest peak in the western hemisphere.

Mt. Aconcagua is an expedition level mountain that has an altitude of 22,842 ft with very treacherous conditions.

"At 13,000 ft, there's no vegetation to be seen. It's very windy, very chilly with temperatures dropping to negative 20 or lower," says Garduce.

As if such conditions weren't tough enough, a snowstorm hit for two consecutive nights—reason enough for Garduce's team of 15 members to decide to abort the climb, despite the two weeks spent acclimatizing their bodies and preparing for the ascent. But Garduce was determined and carried on along with a Swedish national.

"I heard of those who had to quit climbing because of the discomfort they felt, like dealing (with) the very windy and chilly weather. I could have experienced the same thing if I did not have the proper equipment," says Garduce. "But every time I ascended I was in full battle gear with four layers of clothing—undergarments, fleece, The North Face down jacket and The North Face shell jacket."

Having been properly outfitted, he not only survived the climb but succeeded in reaching the top of the mountain.

Aside from apparel, Garduce also had with him the best gear and accessories, from shoes and bags to tents.

"Actually, this was the first time I had the complete gear by The North Face," he notes. "This was a serious climb so it was a good thing The North Face was there to help us out because being equipped with technology is definitely a factor to a successful climb."

This is the second expedition of Garduce that The North Face has supported, the first being his climb of Mt. Elbrus in Caucasus, Russia, the highest peak in Europe.

On to Everest

Currently, The North Face has set its sights on Mt. Everest and has formed the first Philippine team to climb the world's highest mountain. The team's 22 members, set to climb Mt. Everest in 2007, have just come back from India where they underwent training for two months. Their next stop is New Zealand where they will continue to practice alpine climbing.

For some members of the Mt. Everest Philippine team, it was their first time to see snow while in India. It seems almost befitting that the name "The North Face" is based on the notion that in the Northern Hemisphere the north face of a mountain is generally the coldest, iciest and most formidable to climb, hence the most challenging.

Climbing Mt. Everest will surely be a challenge to Filipinos, but with strength and determination like Garduce's, the Philippine Mt. Everest team is sure to make it to the top and make the country proud.

It's about time a brand like The North Face made its way through the Philippines. With all our country has to offer in terms of natural landscape, it's almost a crime to while away time in the malls when there is so much out there to see, or climb.

THE NORTH FACE

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THE NORTH Face carries everything related to mountaineering, including accessories like scarves.

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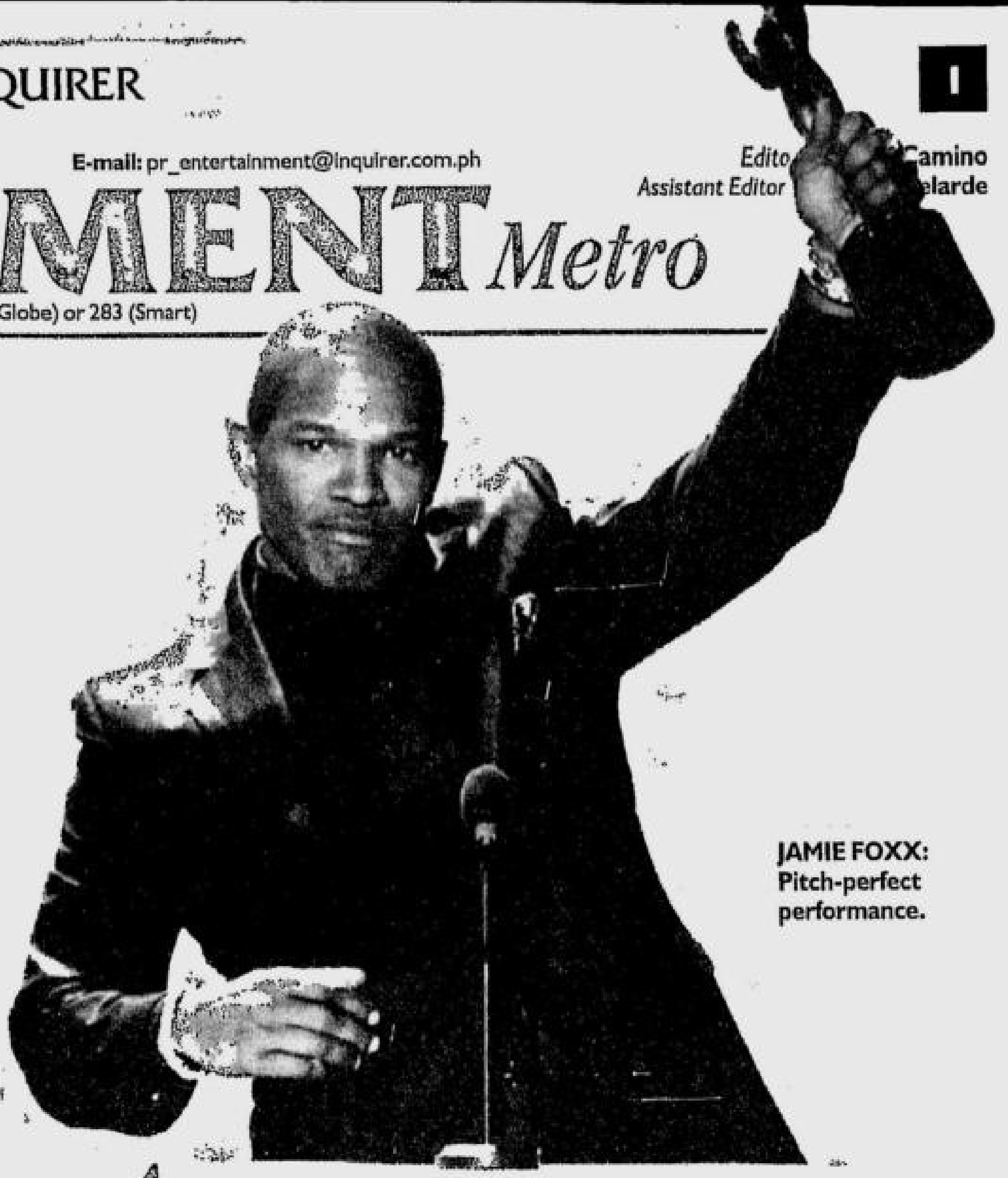
PAUL GIAMATTI, Virginia Madsen, Sandra Oh and Thomas Hayden Church, Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture for "Sideways"



JAMIE FOXX: Pitch-perfect performance.

HILARY SWANK: Million-dollar feeling

'Sideways' knocks out 'Million Dollar Baby'

A who's who of American acting packs the Shrine auditorium in LA as US Screen Actors Guild toasts peers in important pre-Oscar test

LOS ANGELES—Modest wine country comedy "Sideways" staged a surprise knockout over favorites "Million Dollar Baby" and "The Aviator" by winning the top prize for Best Ensemble Acting at the Screen Actors Guild awards on Saturday, an important pre-Oscar test.

Hilary Swank won the Best Actress award for her performance as a gritty boxer in Clint Eastwood's "Million Dollar Baby," and Jamie Foxx was named Best Actor for his pitch-perfect performance as soul singer Ray Charles in "Ray."

Veteran actor Morgan Freeman took the Best Supporting Actor award for playing a gym manager and washed-out fighter in "Million Dollar Baby," and Cate Blanchett won Best Supporting Actress for playing Katharine Hepburn in "The Aviator."

The SAG awards are a major test on the road to the Oscars because actors are the largest single group voting for the Academy Awards. Experts said "The Aviator" or "Million Dollar Baby" would have had front-runner's status for the Best Picture Oscar, Hollywood's highest award, if either had won.

But the same might not be able to be said of "Sideways," a modest comedy that has garnered several critics awards but is not the kind of showy film that wins the Oscar. The film was released by New Corp.'s Fox Searchlight Pictures.

But for many actors, it seemed a perfect movie giving once-in-a-lifetime roles to relatively unrecognized performers.

On stage, "Sideways" actress Sandra Oh thanked her husband, director Alexander Payne, who she said "saw in each one of us something you don't see. Thank you for giving us a shot."

Backstage, co-star Virginia Madsen was asked what the film did for her and said "It got me employed. I am so grateful."

'SIDEWAYS'/3

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Tuesday, February 8, 2005

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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No. 1	Sandara's Romance	Masked Rider Ryuki		Gatekeepers	TV Patrol		Spirits	Krystala	'Til Death Do Us Part	Hiram	Save The Last Dance	Bida Si Mister Bida Si Misis			Insider
NBN		Taiwan/ Winner TV Shopping		Value Vision	Teledyaryo	Value Vision		MMDA On The Road		Network Forum		Teledyaryo		Family Rosary Crusade		Paco Park Presents		Auto Focus	
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	KNN	Anime Ring Kasho		Anime Ring Kasho		Sentro	Lizzie Mcguire	Three Blind Dates		Wow Mali		Big News	The Probe Team Documentaries		Race Hour	Billboard On-Air
GMA 7		Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Joyride	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Knock Out	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin		Starstruck	Stairway To Heaven	Bahay Mo Ba 'To?			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	8 Simple Rules	Ripley's Believe It or Not		Crossing Jordan		John Doe		Newswatch Now	29th Street		
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Linawin Natin		V League				Travel	IBC News Tonite	Up Close And Personal	EZ Shop
Solar		Wwe Raw				Mutant League	Heavy Gear	Maxsteel	Dungeons And Dragons	Stargate SG1		Soldier Of Fortune		RHD/LA		The Wire		Oz	
Nickelodeon	Dora, The Explorer	Little Bear	Blues Clues	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Nick Mix		100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd				Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	Top Of The Pops	MYX Remakes	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Last Comic Standing		The Today Show		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News	Entertainment Tonight	Will & Grace	What I Like About You	One Tree Hill		The O.C.		Tonight Show With Jay Leno		Elimidate	Change of Heart
Cinema One		Walang Iwanan Peksman				Honey Nasa Langit Na Ba Ako				Super B				Naririnig Mo Na Ba Ang L8st?				Got 2 Believe	
Studio 23	Bewitched	Survivor: Thailand	MYX Backtrax					Ragnarok	Project Arms	Wazzup Wazzup	Fightbox	The Amazing Race 6		Smallville		News Central	The Oprah Winfrey Show		The Men's Room
AXN		The Amazing Race 4		Maximum Exposure		Fear Factor		Samurai X	Samurai X	Beastmaster III		Ripley's Believe It or Not		Alias		The Amazing Race 4		Maximum Exposure	
Star World	Becker	The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	Charmed		Wild Card		Manhunt		Friends	Charmed
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	Business International	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic		Thrill Seeker		The Sea Hunters		Yukon Quest		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles Dr Brady Barr	Built For The Kill		Myths Of The Fist		Top 5		Megastructures		Secret China	
Solar Sports		Copenhagen Masters MS Final			FIVB Grand Prix USA vs. China				ATP Heineken Open '05 Semi-Finals1				NBA TV Daily	NBA Game Philadelphia @ New Jersey					Vintage NBA Bob Lanier
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fix	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert	Guess Who's Coming To Decorate		Look For Less	Lifestyle		Clean House	Back To Basics	Road & Track	Back To Basics
HBO			Austin Powers In Gold Member (3.35PM)			Bachelorman (5.10PM)			Old School (6.45 PM)			Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines				Six Feet Under 32 Malung Love Work		Joe's Apartment (10.50PM)	
Star Movies	Trapped (2.45 PM)			Long Life Happiness & Prosperity				MXP: Most Extreme Primate (5.50 PM)			The Transporter (7.25PM)			Shanghai Knights				Rapid Fire (10.55PM)	
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Police Academy	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Teen Titans	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Gundam Seed	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Codename Kids Next Door	Mr. T	Josie And The Pussycats	Boomerang - Boomeraction	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN		English Premier League Highlights 2004/05		NFL Superbowl XXXIX Patriots vs Eagles								Sportscenter Taiwan	World Pool Masters '04 Ann Zee, Holland		Big East Conf.: Connecticut vs Syracuse				Sportscenter Asia
Disney Channel	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Lizzie Mcguire	Even Stevens	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	The Legend Of Tarzan	Lilo & Stitch/Untalkative Bunny	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax	Cinema Secrets III Episode 11 From Comics To Cinema	The Advocate's Devil			True Colors				Cops And Robbersons			Eight Legged Freaks			Borderline (9.40 PM)			Robocop: The Future Of Law Enforcement	
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	King Solomon's Mines				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Judging Amy		Just Cause		King Solomon's Mines - Part 2			Hustle - 2 (10.35PM)		Judging Amy (11.25PM)
Discovery Channel		Civilisations				Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Rides		Human Discovery		Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Science Mysteries	
MTV Philippines		MTV Asia Aid		Non-Stop Hits		Non-Stop Hits		MTV Get Spotted	MTV Loveline	MTV Lokal		MTV Upgraded	MTV Bolahan	TRL		Punk'D	Wildboyz	VH1 Video Collections	
Sports Plus				NFL Gameday	Pac 10 Arizona @ Oregon Reg.					Italian Serie A highlight Program		Arena Football Predators vs. Rattlers						Raceworld	
EWTN	Pope John Paul's Legacy To The Family	Angelus (3.15PM)	Mysteries Of The Rosary	My Little Angels	Angel Force	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Fr. Groeschel	Catholic Morality & The Catechism	EWTN Gallery	The Journey Home		Does The Church Still Teach That	Lord, Have Mercy	Daily Mass		Angelus (10.15PM)	We Are One Body	Web Of Faith	

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Wine and Sympathy

By Francis Rex Alger
Contributor

REVIEW

NEARLY a century ago, California grapes symbolized the rage of the Western American state's poor folks against oppression and economic depression. John Steinbeck immortalized this in his celebrated novel, "The Grapes of Wrath." Now, of course, California has become well-known for its wine counties, and Rex Pickett has written his book "Sideways."

There could have been no better choice than Alexander Payne to adapt it to the big screen.

Payne has made a name for his satires about middle-class Americans. He has only four films to his credit, but it looks like he may be the next big thing in American cinema. "Sideways" does not deal with big issues, as did Payne's first two features, "Citizen Ruth" and "Election." This does not mean, though, that his latest is less impressive.

"Sideways" starts off as a week of wining and whining. Miles and Jack are two middle-aged friends whose personalities are like water and oil. Jack is about to be married, and Miles is gifting his buddy with a trip to the vineyards of the Santa Ynez Valley.

As they hit the road and sip the wines, viewers learn that the two are not successful men, and are therefore feeling less than fulfilled with their lives. Miles is struggling to publish his novel; at the same time he is unable to get over his divorce. Jack is a washed-up actor, but isn't exactly despondent about it. In other words, one is still hopeful for something better, and the other is seemingly resigned to his fate.

Their lives take a turn when they meet Maya, a wine-savvy waitress, and Stephanie, a local wine pourer.

"Sideways" is neither innovative nor searing enough to draw a large number of moviegoers. In fact, none of Payne's works can be considered "commercial." It's appeal lies largely on the feeling that it is personal and intimate. Further, only a few filmmakers cleverly and successfully mix tragedy and comedy.

The brilliant screenplay by Payne and Jim Taylor isn't surprising at all. The duo's skills was immediately noticed on their first collaboration, "Citizen Ruth." They've been showered with recognition since, none the least of which are two Academy nominations. An Oscar on Feb. 27 is almost a certainty.

Under Payne's helm in previous movies, Laura Dern, Reese Witherspoon and Matthew Broderick gave possibly their best performances onscreen. In "Sideways," Payne gathered a cast of non-A-list actors, which turned out to be a smart idea. Thomas Hayden Church as Jack, Virginia Madsen as Maya, and Paul Giamatti as Miles are unforgettable. Giamatti, especially, portrays sad resignation to an insignificant existence with convincing effectivity.

Audiences will no doubt be amused with the film's deliberations linking wine and life. Yet, underneath the bickering and painfully sharp wit, what "Sideways" really offers is warmth and a big, loving heart.

> Two middle-aged buddies hit the road and they figure out how to deal with their less-than-significant lives

PAUL Giamatti (left) and Thomas Hayden Church: bottoms up

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1:20 4:00 6:40 9:20
WITHOUT A PADDLE
12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00
ELEKTRA
1:50 4:20 6:50 9:20
MEET THE FOCKERS
12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00

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1 Dolby ELEKTRA 12:55 3:25 5:55 8:25
2 SDDS ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13 12:55 3:25 5:55 8:25
3 dts SHALL WE DANCE 12:30 3:10 5:50 8:30
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ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13 R13 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:10	RACING STRIPES GP 12:40,3:00,5:20,7:40,10:00	SHALL WE DANCE? GP 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:20

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PG-13
3 ELEKTRA
10:40, 1:05, 3:35
6:05, 8:35, 11:00
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12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00LMF
③ ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
MTRCB: R-13
11:40, 2:10, 4:40, 7:10, 9:40LMF
④ A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
MTRCB: R-13
10:40, 1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00LMF
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1 ELEKTRA
2 BLADE TRINITY
3 RESERVED
4 HANEP SA PORMA

Universal (Manila) tel 733.2470
1

Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) MEET THE FOCKERS
2 UNO
3 (DTS ES) ELEKTRA
4 SCHOOL OF SEDUCTION

Cine Nepo (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 MEET THE FOCKERS
2 SCHOOL OF SEDUCTION
3 (DOLBY) HAUNTED SPIRIT
4 (DTS) ELEKTRA

Cine Nepo (Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 WHITE NOISE
2 BLADE TRINITY
3 (DOLBY) KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 (DTS) IMPOTENT MAN

Centre Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
2 RAISE YOUR VOISE

Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) BLADE TRINITY
2 SCHOOL OF SEDUCTION
3 KAPAG ANG PALAY NAGING BIGAS MAY BUMAYO
4 (DTS) OCEAN'S TWELVE
Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) MAD HOUSE
2 MEET THE FOCKERS
3 (DTS) ELEKTRA
4 PAKAWALANG PUSO
5 HANEP SA PORMA HAYOP SA GANDA

Mega Center Mall (Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 THE GHOST
2 HANEP SA PORMA HAYOP SA GANDA
3 (DTS) WHITE NOISE
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Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
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2 ELEKTRA
3 WHITE NOISE
4 GEORGE & THE DRAGON

Berma Cinema (Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 BLADE TRINITY
2 LIBERATED

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1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RETURN OF THE DEMONS
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) ELEKTRA
5 SCHOOL OF SEDUCTION

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285
1 SCHOOL OF SEDUCTION
2 ANG GALING GALING MO BABES
3 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
4 BLADE TRINITY
5 (DOLBY) ELEKTRA
6 SHALL WE DANCE

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas) tel (047) 237.7007
1 (DOLBY) SO HAPPY TOGETHER
2 OCEAN'S TWELVE

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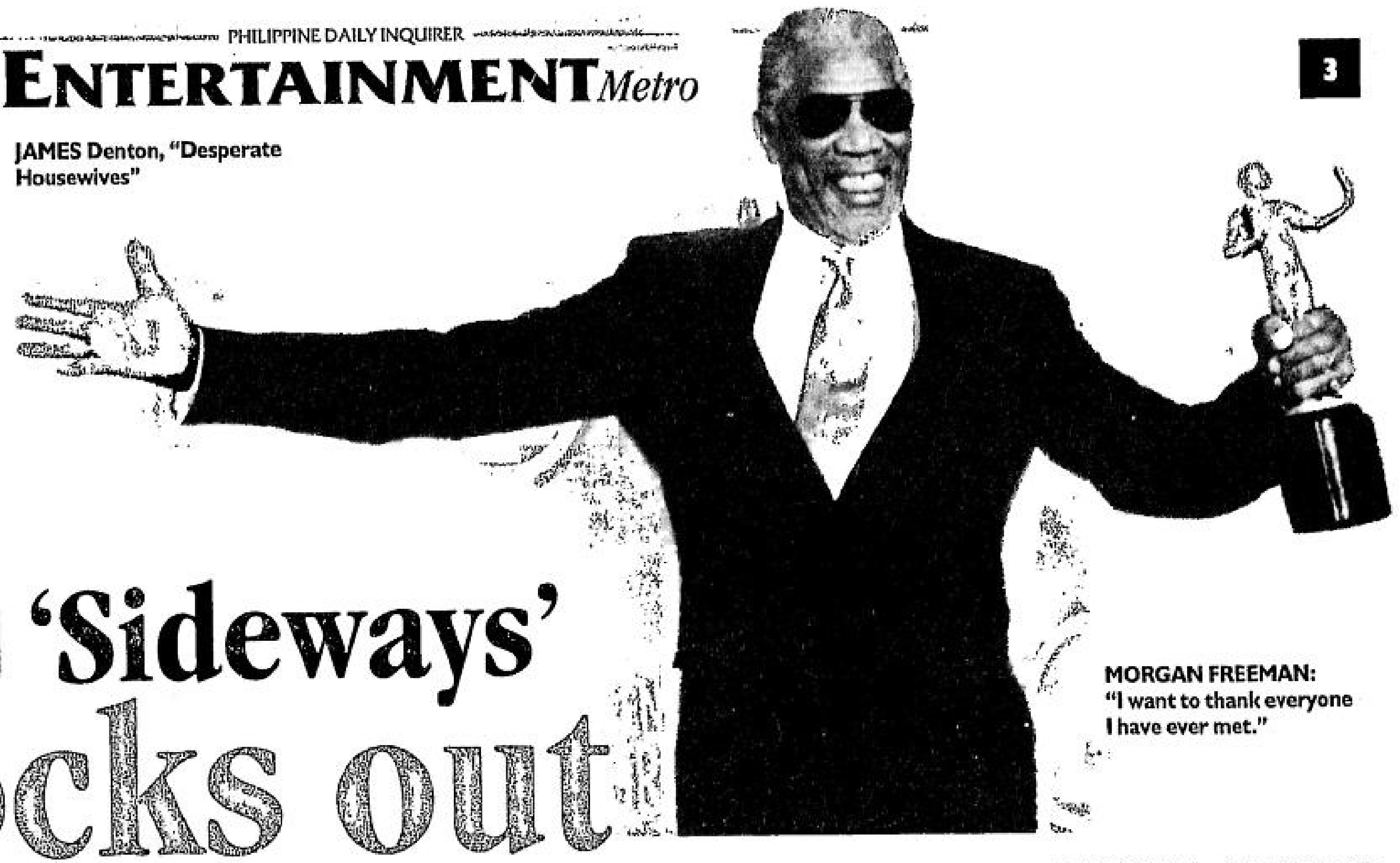
MARCIA Cross, hardly desperate-looking

JAMES Denton, "Desperate Housewives"


MORGAN FREEMAN: "I want to thank everyone I have ever met."

'Sideways' knocks out 'Million Dollar Baby'

CATE Blanchett and Leonardo DiCaprio as presenters

JOHNNY Depp and wife Vanessa Paradis in a rare public appearance together

GLENN Close for "The Lion in Winter"

FABULOUS Charlize Theron

From page 1

Who's who list

Swank won Best Actress for her performance as the scrappy boxer in a drama that so far has succeeded in keeping its surprise ending basically secret.

At the Oscars, Swank will likely see stiff competition from Annette Bening, who plays an aging stage diva in "Being Julia," in a rematch of the Oscar race for 1999 films "American Beauty" and "Boys Don't Cry."

Bening won the SAG award that year playing a housewife whose marriage is on the rocks in "American Beauty," but lost the Oscar to Swank as a troubled, trans-gender teen in "Boys Don't Cry."

A who's who of American acting packed the Shrine auditorium in Los Angeles for an honors program that has established itself as a major stop on the road to the Feb. 27 Oscars.

The only person considered a shoo-in for an award was Foxx, a heavy Oscar favorite. Asked backstage if he may be peaking too early with the Ray Charles role, Foxx said no. "I think this is actually the beginning and not the end." Australian-born Blanchett declared herself totally surprised, saying that had she known she would win, "I wouldn't have worn such a tight dress." She added that the dress made it difficult to walk to the stage.

Freeman joked onstage: "I want to thank everyone I have ever known," then, on a more serious note, added, "I want to thank Clint Eastwood and his family. I want to thank Hilary Swank and . . . and I want to thank you all so much."

Television awards

Australian Oscar winner Geoffrey Rush was Best Actor in a Miniseries or TV Movie for his portrayal of conflicted comedian Peter Sellers in "The Life and Death of Peter Sellers."

Glenn Close won Best Actress in a TV movie or miniseries playing Eleanor of Aquitaine in "The Lion in Winter."

Tony Shalhoub won the award for Best Male Comic Actor in a TV series for his performance as an obsessive-compulsive comedian in "Monk."

ABC's hit "Desperate Housewives" was named Best Ensemble TV Comedy Series, and Teri Hatcher won Best Actress in a TV Comedy Series for her performance on that show.

In an emotional moment, Elaine Orbach took the stage to a standing ovation to accept the award for Best Actor in a Dramatic Series for her late husband, Jerry Orbach, who was the crusty homicide detective Lenny Briscoe on television's "Law & Order."

She talked about his love of acting on stage and screen, mentioning his roles in Broadway hits like "Chicago" and "42nd Street" and offered his motto: "Never leave a hit show."

Jennifer Garner was named Best Actress in a TV Dramatic Series for her work as the super agent in "Alias," and "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" was named best TV drama.

Reuters

"CSI CRIME Scene Investigation won for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble Cast in a TV Drama Series. (From left) George Eads, Marg Helgenberger, Eric Szmanda, William Peterson, Jorja Fox, Paul Guilfoyle and Robert David Hall.

JENNIFER Garner "Alias" Best Actress in a Television Drama

LAURA Linney, nominee

DOUG Savant speaks for "Desperate Housewives" cast (from left) Jesse Metcalfe, Eva Longoria, Felicity Huffman, Steven Culp, Brenda Strong, Nicollette Sheridan, Teri Hatcher.

MENA SUVARI, Sam Mendes and Kate Winslet

MELISSA GILBERT, SAG president

FELICITY Huffman arrives peace-fully.

James Garner, Lifetime Achievement: I must have done something good

LOS ANGELES—James Garner saw his career of more than 30 years in movies and television flash before his eyes Saturday night when he received the Screen Actors Guild's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Garner, who remains a working actor at 76, plays the grandfather on the ABC sitcom "8 Simple Rules" and was SAG-nominated Saturday for his role in the movie "The Notebook."

He lost the Best Supporting Actor award to Morgan Freeman of "Million Dollar Baby," who saluted Garner with a verse from the theme song of Garner's old TV show, "Maverick."

Garner got his start in show business when a men's swim wear scout found the Norman, Oklahoma, native at Hollywood High. He was 16 and known by his real last name, Bumgarner.

"I'm not at all sure how I got here," he said. "This wonderful award lets me think, 'Hey, Jim, you must have done something good.'"

After earning a Purple Heart in the Korean War, Garner landed a small part on Broadway in "The Caine Mutiny Court Martial." That led to a contract with Warner Bros., where he was cast in his first television and movie roles.

He is best known for playing wry detective Jim Rockford on the 1974-80 series "The Rockford Files." He kept the character going in seven TV movies.

After playing Marlon Brando's friend in the movie "Sayonara," Garner became a TV star in "Maverick," the popular Western series in which he portrayed a riverboat gambler who was never afraid to run from a fight. Years later he starred in the movie version with Mel Gibson.

Garner accepted his award from Gibson and another former co-star, Julie Andrews, who proclaimed him "the dishiest fellow you've ever met."

"I lost my screen virginity to Jim in 'The Americanization of Emily,' and I lost my manhood to him in "Victor/Victoria,'" Andrews said.

Greeted by a standing ovation, Garner urged the audience, "Don't do too much of that. I get emotional."

He joked, "I don't know if I deserve this award, but please, for tonight, you'll forgive me if I act like I do."

Garner is a former vice president and board member of the actors' union.

AP

HE GETS emotional, he says. But now he's just happy.

Nora on a high note

The Superstar is living a 'normal life' in the United States—riding the train, doing the grocery, and singing for thousands of fans

SHE IS also delighted to see original Noranians who have migrated there. VONNEL MIRANDILLA

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Contributor

WHEN SHE was interviewed on television recently via overseas phone patch, Superstar Nora Aunor sounded buoyant—lighthearted and good-humored even.

From the sound of that golden voice, it seemed her extended "vacation"-slash-concert tour in the United States was doing her a world of good.

That much she admitted on air.

That being away from the intrigues and negativity of Manila proved reinvigorating for both mind and spirit.

That her "ordinary" life in the States was refreshing, in more ways than one.

Away from the glare of the spotlight, the Superstar is allowed to experience a semblance of normalcy (i.e., peace and quiet) that has somehow eluded her back home.

She enumerated the perks of anonymity: "I can do things here that I can never do there, like going to the grocery and riding the Bart (Bay Area Rapid Transit)."

But some Pinoys, being natural-born intrigue-mongers, wrongly dismissed Nora's respite as a demotion from her nearly royal status in the Philippines. She's wallowing in poverty in the US, they scoffed.

Not so, she insisted. "I'm living a normal life here."

As a bonus, she got to entertain US-based Noranians who had been aching to see her and, through her, get a glimpse of the home they left behind.

Seldom-seen side

Earlier, with dispatch, Nora answered the questionnaire we had e-mailed through manager Norie Sayo.

That's another seldom-seen side of Ate Guy, the tech-savvy star. Loyal fans even swear that their idol personally answers text messages.

As evident from her e-mailed response, Nora was having a ball in the land of Hershey bars.

She confirmed that she would be staying longer in "America, doing concerts on both the East and West coasts."

For the "Power of Two" concerts that she top-billed with Pop Diva Kuh Ledesma, the Superstar got to visit such cities as San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Washington, Chicago, Atlantic City, Virginia Beach, Reno, Jacksonville and Seattle.

According to her concert producers in Artist House, all 10 shows were SRO affairs.

"Only one show was postponed to a later date," Nora reported. "The one in Florida was moved to November (2004) because of the hurricane."

But not even a full-blown tropical depression could derail the Superstar.

"We had fun touring," Nora recalled. "Maybe this year, there'll be a third leg. Ms Kuh is very professional. She's a good co-worker and a good friend."

According to the Superstar, performing for US-based Pinoys was a lot similar to doing shows in the Philippines, except for one glaring difference.

"Audiences in the US are more intense," she related. "I guess it's because they are more excited because they don't get to see a fellow Filipino in concert that often."

Senior citizens

Nora felt elated because she saw a lot of gray-haired *lolos* and *lolas* in the audience. (There were even reports that the old-timers wept openly upon seeing the diminutive diva.)

"I saw a lot of senior citizens who, I was told, didn't go out that often anymore," she said.

But they gladly made an exception for their little Guy.

"In most of our shows, there were fans in wheelchairs," she enthused. "Even those with walking canes would wait patiently in line. Thank God, they were pleased with our show!"

Senior folks are especially close to her heart. She, in fact, is actively helping a group of grizzled veterans in the US.

When she first heard of her triumph at the 31st International Festival of Independent Film, she was at a gathering for Filipino veterans. The Superstar (for "Naglalayag") tied with Megastar Sharon Cuneta (for "Crying Ladies") as Best Actress in the Brussels-based film fest.

"I feel so thankful that I had the chance to meet the group headed by lawyer Lourdes Santos-Tancinco which is helping out veterans," she said. "That Sunday, they had a parade and it was my chance to show my support for them. There was a small get-together afterwards where I was able to meet and talk with them.

This is one issue that I want to champion. I want to help our veterans who, until now, are not given that much support and attention."

That's Nora, a true child of the crusading '70s.

But US-based Noranians come in all shapes, sizes and age groups.

New Noranians

"Most of the original Noranians have migrated abroad," she said. "So in our concert tours, I somehow get the chance to see them. There is also that batch we call the new breed of Noranians. Meaning, they are comparatively younger. Maybe they are in their 20s and 30s. Come to think of it, they must've been babies or kids when I first joined 'Tawag ng Tanghalan.'"

These second-generation fans inherited their love of Nora from their parents.

"Some , approached me and told me that, although they were born in the US, they were able to watch my movies on Betamax and VHS tapes because their parents were Noranians," she said. "Of course, my old soap opera 'Bituin,' which was aired in the US via The Filipino Channel (TFC), was also a big factor."

"Together again," the Superstar was, with her Noranians.

"I am happy to meet and chat with them anywhere," she said.

The most recent stops of the Nora bandwagon were the Hawaiian islands—specifically, the Maui Baldwin High School Auditorium (on Jan. 12) and the Honolulu Waikiki Shell (on Jan. 23).

Long lines

Epee Rapanan, who writes for the San Francisco-based Filipino paper "Pinoy Today," reported that the long lines of fans that gathered for the autograph signing at the Waikiki Shell extended up to the sidewalk which was outside the venue.

The staff had to cut short the session, Rapanan wrote. But the inimitable Ms Aunor insisted on signing "up to the last Noranian," even on the street!

Now, there is talk of more shows in the US (and perhaps Canada), this time with her old *ka*-love team Tirso Cruz III.

Guy and Pip "Together Again" in North America, anyone?

This month and next, she is set to tour the West Coast again.

Her fans back home, however, pray that she would fly back to Manila pronto, in time for the awards season—especially since her latest movie, Maryo J. de los Reyes's "Naglalayag" is again being touted as front-runner in the acting categories (for lead stars Nora and Yul Servo and supporting players Jaclyn Jose and Chanda Romero).

Back to her Brussels victory. Nora considers each trophy she receives "as an inspiration."

"I was thrilled and delighted when I got the good news via text," she said. "It motivates me to make more quality movies."

She said "international recognition" in whatever form would be a much-needed shot in the arm for local cinema.

Not hopeless

"For a long time now we've been hearing people complain that the movie industry is dying," she said.

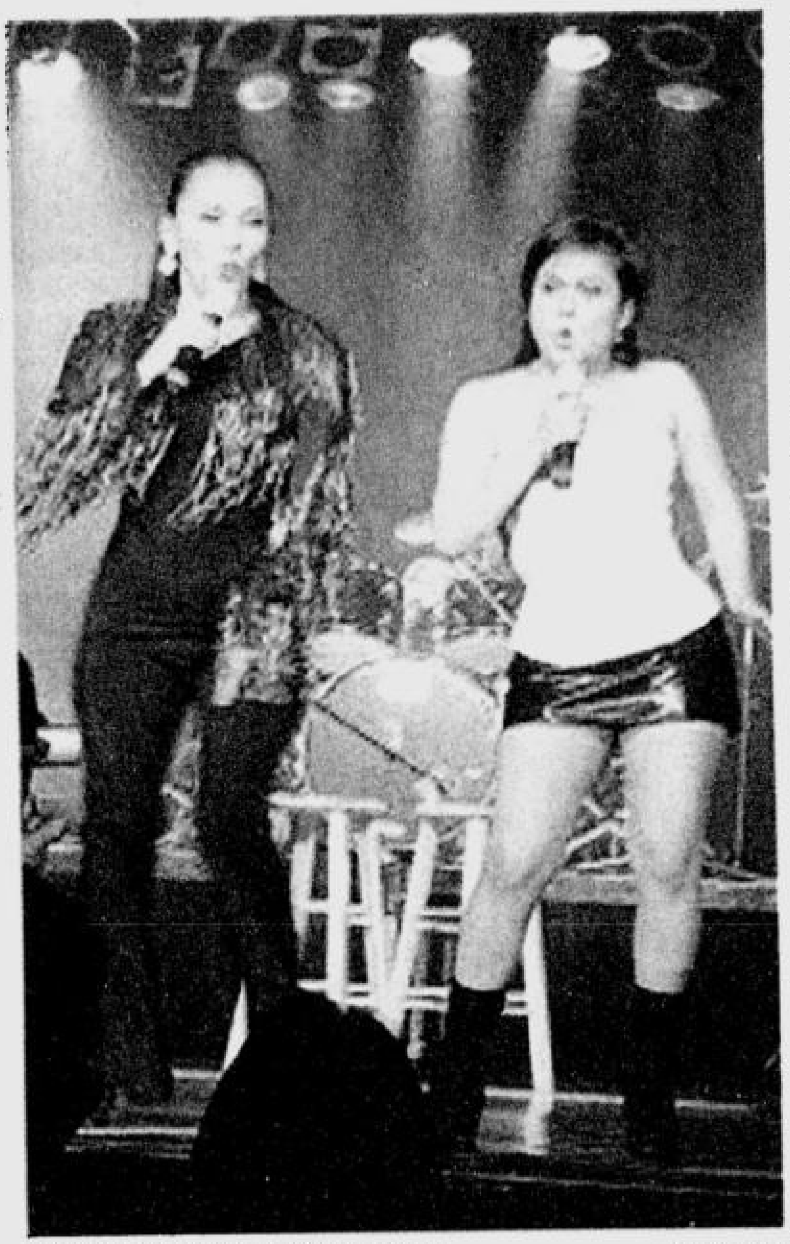
"Like our other problems back home, if we don't work hard and initiate change we won't be able to move forward. This is a situation that cannot be resolved overnight. But if every actor and producer will do their share, we will be able to improve the situation."

She understands that producers are businessmen. Nevertheless, she remains optimistic.

"It's not easy, but it's also not a hopeless case," she said. "The Philippines is a small market. One solution is for our local producers to try to penetrate the international scene. That would hopefully allow them to recoup their investment. At the same time, Filipino movies would become more well-known abroad. Just look at (Hong Kong's) Jackie Chan. We just need to start it."

And to aim high.

"My dream is to bring back the dignity of Filipino movies," she concluded, as expected, on a high note.



HOT SHOW in LA, with Kuh Ledesma OLIVER CARNAY

High crimes and Mitch-demeanors

REVIEW

The artist formerly known as Maya Valdes has single-handedly reinvented stand-up comedy into a rock musical crossed with tell-all memoir

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Contributor

APOLOGIES to Woody Allen, whose movie title we've filched because it best summarizes the theme of "Mitch Valdes the Musical"—the livewire performer's recently concluded series of shows at Tavern on the Square in Greenbelt 3.

While rehearsing for the four-night engagement, Mitch promised: "I bared my breasts in 'Oro, Plata Mata.' In this show I will bare my soul!"

And peel away, she did.

The woman spared no one, foes and friends alike, in her revelations.

In the process, Mitch single-handedly reinvented the stand-up comedy act into a rock musical crossed with tell-all memoir.

"This is not a show," she told the last-night crowd on Saturday. It was comprised mostly of old friends, some from as far back as high school.

"It's as if we're just in my home," she cracked. "But I charged you five hundred bucks for entrance."

Throwing caution and political correctness to the wind, she fearlessly named names (at least, those of her pals who wouldn't get upset). The few left in the "blind items" were bound to be *pikon*.

Trivia and gossip

Mitch acknowledged that her being "verbal and vocal" has saved her countless times in the past. "My big mouth works to my advantage," she said. "It's like I have an outlet. I can instantly get things off my chest. If not, I'll explode!"

The show was peppered with all sorts of show biz trivia and *chismis*.

Did you know that Mitch tackled Ethel Merman's show-stopping role in "Gypsy" (at the CCP and directed by Lino Brocka, no less) at the age of 22, playing mother to Pinky de Leon who was 26?

And from stage mother in Gypsy, she was promoted to earth mother, Mary Magdalene herself, in "Jesus Christ Superstar"?

"That's the beauty of theater," she said. "It was my escape from everyday problems."

Did you know that Mitch's first manager in the '70s was "Oro" filmmaker Peque Gallaga?

"He promised to take care of me," she related, dead-pan. "Six months later, he had a nervous breakdown.

He OD'd and had to go to a rehab center in Bacolod."

Did you know that she started in the biz as the lead female vocalist of the rock band, Birth of the Cool?

"Can you imagine, I was a rocker?" she chortled. "I wore plain T-shirt and went braless onstage, in La Concha at the Hyatt!"

Hippie daze

Don't get her started on her flower-child days (daze?)—which she effortlessly mined for laughs.

Whether it was about taking potshots at the Metrocom or taking part in pot sessions with Pepe Smith, the woman was unabashed and unapologetic about the past.

She recalled "shotgun" misadventures with fellow show biz *colegiala* June Kiethley with the editing machine in her brain turned off.

Just to rub it in, Mitch hollered: "And now June is one of the pillars of the Marian movement! You have to be a sinner before you can become a saint."

Did you know that she also strutted her stuff in Eduardo's, that legendary night spot on Roxas Boulevard, during the martial-law era?

"I was singing in front of generals who, after two glasses of Scotch, would always request 'My Way,'" she said.

THAT'S versatility

She led a double life, to say the least. In La Concha, she was a head-banging hippie in jeans. In Eduardo's, she was a diva in sequined gowns.

"In Eduardo's," Mitch reminisced, "the queen was Carmen Pateña."

That, of course, was her cue to launch an impersonation of La Carmen singing "Saranggola ni Pepe" a la Shirley Bassey.

Freakish

Just as outrageous was her commentary on the Pinoy's penchant for mangling song lyrics, interchanging Ps with Fs, giving a whole new meaning to the tune, "Freak Out."

And did you know that she once performed in a dive, accepting a bottle of Tequila Gold as talent fee?

She's a walking time capsule, this woman.

In quick succession, she took aim at and brought down with precision such fave topics as sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll, her last mammogram session, and the inanities and insanities of local show biz.

All this she accomplished with a little help from her friends, stage director Kokoy Jimenez and musical director Mel Villena (whom she met on the set of "Champoy").

Lest we forget, Mitch's life is also one big musical extravaganza.

As such, her hilarious spiels were interspersed with the songs that helped shape her as a performer and as a woman.

Her range (and depth) was undeniable: swiftly shifting from Broadway ("Big Spender") to blues ("Good Morning Heartache"), from disco ("I Love the Night Life") to pop ("Natural Woman") and r&b/rock, of course ("Try a Little Tenderness").

She even did an acoustic medley of "Livin' La Vida Loca," "Let's Get Loud" and "Celebration."

Now, that's versatility.

More!

She could teach all those "American Idol" wannabes (and jurors) a thing or two about belting out such contest staples as "Chain of Fools," "Respect," and "Son of a Preacher Man."

We all agree on the importance of developing new talents, but we should also celebrate seasoned performers like Mitch who can still swing with confidence and conviction.

How we wish we could see more of Mitch the singer on TV and less of the witless and talent-less horde churned out by the network star search factory.

Then again, Mitch can always take on the live concert scene and leave the boob tube to the boobs.